STANDARDIZATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM:
A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

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Our concern about spreading the contents of the Specialization Course on Quality Management in Tourism that took place in 2009 within the framework of the Forum of Professionals in Tourism-IRAM (Argentine Standards Institute), given the outstanding results obtained and the favorable comments by participants, made us resort to the Library of the National Congress to prepare a publication aimed at sharing the proposal of each module with the provinces and the readers of the Library.

We were pleasantly surprised to discover that the Library itself was already committed to quality, when National Deputy Juan Carlos Gioja, President of the Joint Administrative Committee, enthusiastically explained to us the characteristics of the forthcoming certification.

This was an institution that was not only more than one hundred years old but also holder of a tradition of excellence, as well as a guarantee of access to information and to the new technologies for the general public, with special emphasis on reaching every corner of our country.

Nowadays, the hope that was built around such a promising introduction has become true. The contents of the Course on Quality Management in Tourism appear in this brief and basic volume that will be effective and efficient as well as a guide for future on-site and on-line courses.

Specializing in quality in tourism, an activity with a lot of room for improvement, represents an labor opportunity for young graduates. At the Forum we understand it that way, and for that reason we are committed to the development of tools to address the subject with the required depth and seriousness. In recent years, tourism in Argentina – under the initiative of the National Tourism Secretariat – has taken a step towards the implementation of instruments to turn quality in tourism services into a

competitive strategy. This book is a dream come true that pushes us towards that goal.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the terms standardization, systems, management, quality, rational use of resources, social responsibility, and so on, have become part of our daily vocabulary. This fact is known by every organization and it explains a growing need to have more information on the subject.

However, these terms are frequently used without full knowledge of their meanings. So, when there is no sound conceptual basis, the comprehension and use of technical standards become difficult.

This publication is aimed at all those who are new to the issue of management in relation to technical standard implementation, and introduces all aspects related to standardization and quality as comprehensive concepts in tourism. We work on a theoretical-conceptual framework that examines each specific subject related to standards and management systems (quality, environment, security, health organization, social responsibility, comprehensive aspects, etc.).

First of all, we will define some concepts in order to share a common language. Then, we will analyze standardization throughout time by observing its historical development. Then, we will focus on standardization organizations, whether international or national, taking into account their social role when issuing technical

standards. Finally, the specific standardization applied to tourism activities will be analyzed together with an overview of quality in tourism nowadays.

The purpose of this article is to sensitize and internalize the basic concepts of standardization and quality, understanding their historical context, their importance and application, as well as their use in different fields of the current economy and particularly in tourism.

2. Standardization and Quality: Theoretical Framework

"Science is a dynamic entity not only composed of propositions but also of proposals and acts led by criteria, rules or standards with which scientific researchers intend to satisfy certain desiderata (truth, clarity, universality, etc.). And some criteria used in science are clearly prescriptive (...)

Mario Bunge[1]

Standards are part of society and of people's public or private life. They are present at home, at work, in the street, in the relationships among people, organizations and countries.

Societies have standards of different origin and purposes: on the one hand, standards from the legislative power, which are compulsory. On the other hand, there exist voluntary standards that contribute to achieve organizational purposes and the observance of requirements. In this article, we will work on the second group of standards.

Standardization is a process intended to establish provisions (rules, criteria, characteristics) to face real or potential problems. These provisions are aimed at common and repeated uses, in order to achieve an optimum set of rules in a given context, whether technological, political or economic. This is the definition proposed by ISO (International Standardization Organization). The result of this process is a document called standard which specifies the provisions agreed by all the interested

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[1] Bunge, Mario. *Ética, ciencia y técnica*. Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1996. Page 30.

parties (governments, public administration, private enterprises, labor unions, consumers, academic sectors, civil associations, and so on).

There is a set of concepts directly related to standardization, among which we can mention: cultural change, organizational change, processes, product, compliance with requirements, management systems, analysis, measurement and continuous improvement and audits.

Standardization as a process has a set of purposes and maximizes the possibility to obtain certain benefits that must be highlighted:[2]

- It provides a benchmark to comply with minimum requirements for processes, products, services and people.

- It promotes the creation of a technical language common to governments, service and product organizations, providers, customers and consumers.

- It fosters business efficacy, efficiency and competitiveness, especially as regards new technologies.

- It contributes to improve the standard of living of individuals by encouraging the participation of diverse social and economic sectors in standardization processes.

- When a certain industrial sector has no national standards, it will depend on the technology of those countries which do have them, and will have to adjust to their technical and commercial requirements.

- It allows the development of markets in accordance with rules and practices aimed at reducing technical barriers to trade and clarifying transactions in order to define needs and optimize customer-provider relations.

- It furthers economic development by allowing production rationalization through the control of the technical characteristics of products, customer satisfaction, validation of production methods, and the guarantee of security of operators and installation staff.

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[2] See: http://www.iram.org.ar/

- It promotes the transfer of new technologies within the essential domains for companies and the community: new materials, information systems, surveillance technology, electronics, production, etc.

- It helps customers and consumers to choose the fittest products depending on their intended use; moreover it contributes to their protection by guaranteeing the design and production of safe products.

- It promotes innovation and continuous improvement of processes and products.

- It favors competitiveness by providing the best tools to conquer markets through better knowledge of markets and their tendencies.

- It is also a tool to make efficacy- and efficiency-oriented public policies within the framework of government modernization processes.

In brief, the purpose of *a standard is to establish clear provisions that facilitate communication and commercial exchanges carried out at a national and international level*. Two basic concepts arise from the preceding paragraph, which will be discussed below.   In the first place, there is the matter of facilitating communication. It can be asserted that facilitating communication means using codes that are known and agreed by:

- the issuer and the receiver;

- the staff within the organization;

- the organization and its customers,

- the government with the organizations;

- the organizations among themselves,

- the customer and the provider.

The second concept is linked to the facilitation of commercial exchanges due to the standards, which means:

- Better adjustment of products, processes, services, systems, and personal skills to pre-set purposes.

- International technological cooperation.

- Prevention of obstacles to trade.

- Certification of compliance with standards.

- Saving of resources.

- Interchangeability

Technical standards can be national, regional and international, depending on the agency in charge of issuing them.

There are standards that specify requirements for management systems, products, people. We will focus on management standards, so it is important to define what we mean by management systems. After providing the definitions of standardization and technical standards, the next step is to define the terms "system" and "management". Their concepts may vary but, as we are talking about standards that promote the creation of a universal language, we will take into account the definition proposed by the ISO 9000 standard on fundamentals and vocabulary. In the standard, system is defined as a "set of interrelated or interacting elements," management means "coordinated activities to direct and control an organization and finally a management system is "a system to establish policy and objectives and to achieve those objectives.[5]"

The reasons for the implementation of a management system may vary depending on the kind of system referred to (quality, environment, etc). These reasons include:

- The need to standardize the product and/or service;

- The need to standardize the operation/management;

- Addressing and making changes in the sector;

- Addressing and providing solutions to changes in customer expectations;

- The need to give customers time-consistent solutions.

- Continuous improvement of organizational efficacy.

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[3] ISO 9000:2005, 3.2.1
[4] ISO 9000:2005, 3.2.6
[5] ISO 9000:2005, 3.2.2

The need for competitiveness in markets, and the intention to satisfy ever more demanding customers and to increase profits lead organizations to the implementation of management systems according to standards[6].

And it is right here where the concept of quality becomes relevant. ISO 9001 is the international standard specifying the requirements for a quality management system that defines quality as the "degree to which a set of inherent characteristics comply with requirements."[7] Quality is understood as an observable, measurable and quantifiable fact that is related not to an absolute but to a relative degree of fulfillment of requirements. Requirements emerge as specifications established by the customer (understood as "organization or person that receives a product") and by the organization itself, as well as by laws and regulations issued by relevant authorities.

In close connection with quality, we may highlight the role of the process approach. A process is an ordered sequence of interrelated activities that transform inputs in outputs, creating intrinsic value for customers. Processes are designed and made following customer requirements (and legal, organizational and interest groups' requirements, etc.), linking activities so as to satisfy said requirements more effectively and efficiently, assigning responsibilities to said activities.

As already mentioned, the requirements of a standard are to be fulfilled by the organizations. The most recent versions of Management Standards, such as ISO 9001, are based on the PDCA Cycle, Plan-Do-Check-Act, developed in 1920 by Walter Shewhart and popularized by W. Edwards Deming.[9]

First of all, implementation must be planned by specifying purposes and scheduling the necessary resources in order to carry out what was planned (do), then verifying/monitoring/checking the degree to which the implementation plan was fulfilled so that finally the necessary steps are taken for continuous improvement.

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[6] These standards serve as a framework to implement management systems related to: quality (ISO 9001), environment (ISO 14001), occupational health and safety (IRAM 3800/OHSAS 18001), comprehensive systems (IRAM 42100 on seaside resorts).

[7] ISO 9000:2005, 3.1.1

[8] ISO 9000:2005, 3.3.5 Product is defined by ISO 9000:2005 standard as "*the outcome of a process*". ISO 9000:2005, 3.4.2

[9] To better understand the PDCA cycle in relation to the process approach and management standards, see: "Guide on the process approach for quality management systems", ISO/TC 176/SC 2/N 544R document, May 2001.

Each activity forms part of this cycle.

Different methods and techniques are used to check the degree to which requirements are fulfilled, such as audits. An audit is defined as "a systematic, independent and documented process for objective evidence-gathering and assessment in order to evaluate if audit criteria are being met"[10] .

Audits are classified as first-party; second-party and third-party audits and they supplement each other. Internal audits are the so called first-party audits, while external audits can be second-party (when the company/organization audits a provider) and third-party audits are carried out by certification bodies[11].

In Argentina, the National System of Standards, Quality and Certification is regulated by Decree 1474/94, which creates the system, and defines its scope, operation and implementation.

It is very important to differentiate the meaning of accreditation and certification according to the National System of Standards, Quality and Certification. Accreditation is the formal recognition granted by a third party that an organization meets the specified requirements and that it is competent to perform specific tasks to assess compliance.

According to section 13 of Decree 1474/94, accreditation bodies have, among others, the following functions: to accredit bodies that certify management systems, products, services and processes, and laboratories that test and calibrate compliance with applicable rules and future amendments or replacements; to specify the scope and effective term of said accreditation; to audit certification bodies and accredited laboratories in order to ensure compliance with relevant rules during the effective term of the accreditation; and to cancel or suspend, in whole or in part, the accreditation in case of non-compliance with relevant standards, or when evidence is produced of incapacity to perform the activities included in the certification. In Argentina, this activity is carried out by the *Organismo Argentino de Acreditación* (Argentine Accreditation Body – OAA, by its Spanish acronym).

On the other hand, certification is the voluntary process through which a certification body assesses the compliance of a process, product, system or person with previously

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[10] ISO 9000:2005, 3.9.1
[11] Also by accreditation bodies.

specified requirements, and authorizes and issues a declaration stating that compliance with said requirements has been proved. Organizations that wish to have their management system certified must do so through a certification body, which is an independent third-party that audits said organizations.

3. Standardization and Quality in Time

"When the only tool you have is a hammer,

every problem begins to resemble a nail"

Abraham Maslow[12]

Since the dawn of history and even before, there has been evidence of the development and application of standards. This article is not intended to discuss preindustrial societies but the development of industrial capitalism as a promoter of standardization and technical standards at the national and global level. We cannot ignore the role of the industrial and French revolution that produced both a new production system and a new social and industrial organization.

It was then that the search for the mass production of products began. Industrial efforts were aimed at this and at increased efficacy and efficiency. Mass production was boosted by technological progress, the intensive use of machinery, larger number of workers, and organizational schedules that started using labor standards.

Therefore, it was possible to produce more products, for an ever growing number of consumers, located in an increasing number of countries. Considering the expansion of trade by the end of the XIX century and standardization, we should take into account the implementation of the Decimal Metric System, which sought to establish a single global system to facilitate exchange. The first classical school of management to consider standardization as an element to organize production was the Scientific Management School, founded by Frederick Taylor (1856-1915), who started to study new methods to improve productivity at work. Henri Fayol (1841-1925), who was

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[12] Quoted in: Albrecht, Karl. *Todo el poder al cliente*. Translated by Jorge Piatigorsky. First edition (reprint), Paidós, Barcelona, 1996. P. 77.

contemporary to Taylor, also tried to provide a rational answer to the organizations of that time. He laid down a set of fourteen principles for context-based management. Some innovations from the Neoclassical School -which followed Taylor and Fayol- are still used, such as the manuals and organization charts employed in organizational design. In the 30s, the British Standards 600, based on E.S.Pearson's statistics, were adopted in England. Likewise, the prevention of defects through process analysis was first taken into account by W. A. Shewhart, author of the PDCA cycle and of statistical control charts. In 1931 he published "*Economic control of quality of manufactured product*". It was at that time that there appeared Departments of Quality Engineering, which were in charge of inspections, laboratories and quality planning.[13]The globalization of productive capital resulted in the standardization of production according to specified requirements that had to be met regardless of the geographical place where the processes are physically carried out. Said process grew arithmetically between the Industrial Revolution and the Second World War, and geometrically after the 50s, when it began to speed up thanks to the Telecommunications Revolution. The use of standards (for example, American war standards Z-1) and statistical quality control increased during the Second World War. The reason was that the war exposed the need to render production more effective and efficient. This was achieved with the standardization and implementation of certain statistical methods. During the post war period, significant progress was made in the field of quality. After being defeated in the Second World War, Japan was in ruins. Standardization and quality control contributed to the recovery and fast growth of Japan. The Japanese Standards Association was created in 1945, followed by the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee in 1946, the 1949 Industrial Standardization Law, and the 1950 Japanese Farm Standards Law. Quality control in Japan was largely encouraged by W. Edward Deming, who gave several lectures to managers and engineers in 1950. The topics of the lectures were: 1. How to improve quality with the PDCA Cycle; 2. The importance of capturing dispersion in statistics; 3. Process control through control charts and how to use them.[14]In the 50s, quality control became fashionable in Japanese factories, especially emphasizing statistics, control charts and sample inspections. This fact brought about some problems, since the focus was on inspection.   It was at that time that the approach

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[13] Mariño Navarrete, Hernando. *Gerencia de la calidad total*. Fifth Edition, Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogotá, 1991. P. 46.
[14] Such was the influence that Deming exerted on Japan that the Deming prizes were created to honor individuals and companies.   Deming's work in Japan is discussed in: ¿Qué es el control total de la calidad*?* Translated by Margarita Cárdenas. First Edition (fifth reprint), Editorial Norma, Colombia, 1992. P. 6, 14 and 15.

was changed, and quality began to focus on process factors that could bring about defective products. Joseph M. Juran also made important contributions to the issue of quality in Japan. In 1954, he was invited by the Japanese Association of Scientists and Engineers to give a seminar and stated that quality is a managerial responsibility because improvements are a consequence of a change in the attitude of the top management. At the same time, in the Western World, production processes were mainly headed to satisfy technical and production needs, and quality was mainly linked to the lack of defects and conformity to specifications. It was only in the 80s that quality began to be considered a strategic element.[15] Karl Albrecht[16] stated that in the United States, in the 50s, there existed virtually no quality theory; whereas in the 60s, if there existed any at all, it was probably a theory of quality control. The 70s were characterized by the evolution in the concept of quality towards "quality assurance", which is discussed below. During the 80s, a series of excellence models based on the Deming Quality Prize were promoted and established in the Western World. In 1987, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was established in the United States in memory of its promoter, who was Secretary of Commerce of said country. In 1988, one year later, 14 European companies joined to create the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). In Argentina, the National Quality Award was created in 1992 by Act 24127, whose aim was: *"the promotion, development and spreading of processes and systems for the continuous improvement of quality in products and services originated in the entrepreneurial sector and in the public administration area, in order to promote the modernization and competitiveness of those organizations".*[17] The National Foundation "Premio Nacional a la Calidad" (National Quality Award) created in 1993, is in charge of the administration of the award, which is granted by the President on behalf of the Argentine Nation.[18]In 1998, the Ibero-American Foundation for Quality Management **(**FUNDIBEQ, by its Spanish acronym**)** was created. It is a supranational foundation supported by the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government intended to promote quality management in Ibero-American companies and institutions**.**[19] The following year, the IX Summit approved the Ibero-American Management Excellence Model in Havana. It was based on the Excellence

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[15] Alonso Almeida, Mar; Barcos Redín, Lucía; Martín Castilla, Juan Ignacio. *Gestión de la calidad en los procesos turísticos*. Editorial Síntesis, España, 2006. P. 16.
[16] Albrecht, Karl. *Todo el poder al cliente*. Translated by Jorge Piatigorsky. First edition (reprint), Paidós, Barcelona, 1996. P. 86-87.
[17] Section 2, Act 24127/92.
[18] Section 3, Act 24127/92.
[19] For more information on FUNDIBEQ, see: www.fundibeq.org

Model of the EFMQ (European Foundation for Quality Management) and adjusted its language to Latin-American specificities. If quality history is considered from the point of view of evolution, it may be affirmed that there exist three main periods: quality inspection and control, quality assurance and quality management. At the beginning of the first stage, final product inspection was considered as the fundamental control technique, although process control was incorporated in parallel with technological development and statistical sampling throughout the production chain. This approach was characterized as reactive. At the international level, the publication in 1987 of the first version of ISO 9001 Standard became a landmark in the history of quality. It was periodically revised and its new versions appeared in 1994, 2000 and 2008. The second stage, "quality assurance", adopted a preventive approach. Examples include versions 1987 and 1994 of the ISO 9000 series. Quality assurance absorbed and completed quality control by adding it to a documentary system that established a set of planned actions intended to bring about confidence that the product was going to meet certain requirements. Finally, quality management is the approach that integrates the internal and external aspects of the organization, including both top management and all the staff. It is aimed at satisfying the requirements of internal and external customers, and to continuous improvement. Versions 2000 and 2008 of the ISO 9000 series are generally mentioned as examples.

The ISO and standardization organizations at the national and international level

"...*Quality may be defined as the establishment of proper requirements and the strict compliance with those requirements".* F. Crosby[20]

As mentioned above, there are national, regional and international standards, classified according to the origin of the standardization organization. Among international organizations,[21] we have mentioned the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)[22].ISO was created in 1947 after the Second World War. It is formed by national

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[20] Crosby, F. *Hablemos de calidad.* Editorial McGraw-Hill, 1989. Quoted in: Senlle, Andrés. *Calidad en los servicios y en la administración* pública. Ediciones gestión 2000, Barcelona, 1996. P. 38.
[21] There exist other standardization bodies, such as the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC); the Air Transport Association (IATA), etc, that fall beyond the scope of this article.
[22] For more information on ISO and its activities, see: www.iso.org

standardization organizations from 160 countries, and a General Secretariat at Geneva, Switzerland. It promotes the development of international standards about systems, processes and products for industry, trade, public administration, etc. It does not depend on any other international organization. It is an advisory body of the United Nations Organization, and it closely cooperates with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).Its members are divided into: *Simple members, one by country, represented by the most representative national organization.* *Corresponding members*, representing organizations from developing countries that do not yet have a national standardization committee. They play no active role in the standardization process, but they are duly informed about the works on which they are interested. *Subscribed members,* countries with reduced economies required to pay lower rates than corresponding members. The ISO Standards to be analyzed in this publication because of their link with tourism activities include ISO 9000 on quality management systems; ISO 14000 on environmental management and ISO 22000 on food safety management. ISO 9001 describes the requirements of a quality management system applicable to organizations which are willing to prove to itself and to third parties that they achieve and continuously improve customer satisfaction, and allow certification by third parties. Companies engaged in export or import activities must know that there are more than one million ISO 9001 certified companies around the world today. On the other hand, the certification, according to this standard, has become a barrier to entering certain markets: *companies that are not certified are not entitled to operate as providers*. So the certification progressively becomes a requirement to take part in national, regional and international bids, as well as a requirement imposed by customers who require their providers to be certified. ISO 14001 enables all kinds of organizations to systematically control the diverse environmental problems arising from their activities, products and services. It is intended to satisfy the needs and expectations of a wide variety of interested parties, in addition to customers. This system enables the organization to establish and assess the effectiveness of the procedures to create environmental policies and purposes, to comply with them, and to prove this compliance to third parties. Finally, ISO 22000 contains a series of requirements that allow the organization to harmonize requirements so as to systematically manage safety in food supply chains. It contributes to the efficiency of the organization by minimizing disease risks to which customers might be exposed due to food contamination. Finally, as regards tourism, it is worth mentioning that ISO has a Technical Committee, the ISO TC 2008. Regional organizations include the Pan

American Standards Commission (COPANT, by its Spanish acronym) and the MERCOSUR Standardization Association (AMN, by its Spanish acronym).COPANT[23] is America's regional standardization organization, and its aim is to develop technical standardization and related activities within its member countries. Its Technical Committees include one devoted to standardization in tourism: the CT 149 "Tourism Services", whose full members are: UNIT, DIGENOR, IBNORCA, NC, IRAM, DGN, INDECOPI, ANSI, INTECO and SCC. The following organizations have observer status: FONDONORMA, COGUANOR, COHCIT, INN, JBS, ABNT and AENOR. Its mission is "*the preparation and spreading of Regional Standards for tourism services by developing a culture of quality for the benefit of the users and countries of the region*"; while its vision is "*to achieve the complete integration of the regional tourism sector by establishing functional parameters recognized by all member countries*". The AMN[24] is composed of standardization organizations from MERCOSUR Member countries; the Argentine Standards Institute (IRAM, by its Spanish acronym), the National Institute of Technology and Standardization of Paraguay (INTN, by its Spanish acronym), the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT, by its Portuguese acronym) and the Technical Standards Institute of Uruguay (UNIT, by its Spanish acronym). Its mission is "*the promotion and development of standardization and related activities such as product and service quality in MERCOSUR member countries, with special emphasis on the industrial, scientific and technological development for the benefit of economic and commercial integration and to encourage the exchange of goods and services, facilitating technical, scientific, economic and social cooperation.*" The scope of its MERCOSUR Tourism Committee, called CSM 23, includes the standardization of occupations and qualified workers, specific products and services in the tourism sector.

Finally, IRAM operates at the national level.[25] Founded in 1935 as "Instituto Argentino de Racionalización de Materiales" (Argentine Institute for the Rationalization of Materials), it is a non-profit association whose creation was inspired by the German Standardization Organization (DIN, Deutsches Institut Für Normung), the British Standards Institution (BSI) and the French Association AFNOR (Association Française de Normalisation). In 1995, the National Industry Secretariat, in its capacity as enforcement authority of Decree 1474/94, signed an agreement with IRAM, whereby it was declared Argentine Standards Institute within the framework of the National

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[23] For more information, see: www.copant.org
[24] For more information, see: www.amn.org.br
[25] For more information, see: www.iram.org.ar

System of Standards, Quality and Certification. IRAM is in charge of studying and approving technical standards for the Argentine territory. Its Tourism Subcommittee is in charge of the development of standards by sector. Almost all of them are published as IRAM-SECTUR, under an agreement signed with the National Tourism Secretariat. It is worth mentioning that IRAM develops standardization activities and also acts as a certification organization. In 1998 it was accepted as member of IQNet, an international network that provides certification services and whose certificates are recognized by leading certification organizations of the International Certification Network.[26]

Standardization, quality and tourism. The evolution of standardization and quality in tourism has made significant progress in the last decades. Nowadays, there is a growth in the publication of tourism standards by sector and in the granting of quality certifications to public and private organizations, coupled with an increase in educational proposals and people's interest in the subject. Due to space reasons, we will only discuss the topic in relation to Argentina. First of all, it is worth highlighting that in the Argentine National Act on Tourism, approved in December 2004 and enacted in January 2005, quality is mentioned as a guiding principle. It is a "*priority to optimize quality in all tourism destinations and activities, in order to meet national and international demand.*"[27] In the last decades, the most frequently applied international standard in the tourism sector has been ISO 9001 on quality management, since it is a generic standard that can be adapted to all organizations, regardless of their type, size and geographical location. Due to the difficulties faced by many tourism agencies, in 2003 IRAM started working on the development of a "*Guidance for the interpretation of ISO 9001:2000 requirements on tourism services*". The outcome was the publication of IRAM 30400:2004, which was the first national standard on tourism. This standard provided a framework to enable travel agencies, hotels, restaurants and other organizations to understand how the requirements could be adapted to each organization. One year later, IRAM began to work on the first sector standard, IRAM 42100, on services at seaside resorts. IRAM 42100:2005 is a comprehensive management standard on quality, security and environment. The Guidelines and the

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[26] The aims of IQNet are the recognition and promotion of internationally accepted certificates issued by its members; the satisfaction of customer needs by providing innovative services with added value; and the provision of compliance assessment services and certifications to customers throughout the world. For more information, see: http://www.iqnet-certification.com/

[27] Section 2, Act 25997

Self-assessment Guide were used as background documents for the analysis and preparation of the standard, named Quality beach areas and seaside resorts: tourism and environmental management" and whose first version was presented in November 2004 at the International Tourism Fair (FIT, by its Spanish acronym). Standardization in tourism experienced a major boost after the signing of the agreement between IRAM and the National Tourism Secretariat on 14 February 2007. From then on, work began on IRAM-SECTUR standards, which were focused on concrete tourism activities, both in relation to comprehensive management systems and labor skills. In 2007, the first eleven IRAM-SECTUR standards were published, and in 2008, twelve more standards were added.[28] As regards quality management certifications, in the private sector, processes were certified in travel agencies, hotels and business associations, among others, under ISO 9000 Standards. As regards seaside/riverside resorts, both public and private establishments (Colón, Entre Ríos, and Noctiluca, Villa Gesell, respectively) were certified under IRAM 42100 standard. Besides standards there are certifications, programs and directives that promote quality sensitization and organizational improvements. The Initial System of Organizational Management (SIGO, by its Spanish acronym) was developed for tourism companies with the support of the National Tourism Secretariat and the Argentine Chamber of Tourism (CAT, by its Spanish acronym). SIGO is a tool that helps to improve management of Small and Medium Sized Companies of the sector, and it is aimed at solving basic aspects of their activities. It is composed of four modules: 1. The human factor in quality. 2. The focus on customers. 3. Management of habitual activities; and 4. Management of innovation and improvement. Also intended for small and medium sized tourism companies and based on an agreement between the National Tourism Secretariat and the State Secretariat on Tourism and Commerce of Spain, the Program of Good Practices in Tourism Destinations was created to increase the competitiveness of destinations by sensitizing providers about the importance of quality. Likewise, it is worth mentioning the participation of tourism companies in the National Quality Award (PNC, by its Spanish acronym). One of these companies, Hotel Intercontinental, was awarded the prize in the large service company category.[29] As regards public administration, there are some municipalities that have certified processes under ISO 9001 standard in their local Tourism Secretariats and Boards, such as the municipalities

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[28] See the list of IRAM-SECTUR Standards in the relevant chapter of this book.
[29] It is worth mentioning that in other countries, awards similar to the Argentine PNC have been received by tourism companies. For example, Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. was awarded the US Malcolm Baldrige Award in 1992 and 1999.

of General Belgrano, Partido de la Costa and Pilar. In relation to the implementation of municipal tourism management, it is worth mentioning the role of IRAM 30300 --a Guide for the Interpretation of IRAM-ISO 9001:2000 in municipalities. Likewise, actions related to the implementation of sustainable practices in municipal management were promoted. As a consequence of the new scenario, in 2009 the National Tourism Secretariat issued a Catalogue of Sustainable Practices in Municipal Management. It describes institutional practices (in the municipalities of Villa Gesell, Capilla del Monte, Federación and Malargüe), social practices (in Mina Clavero, Paraná, Santa Rosa de Calamuchita and Villa General Belgrano) and environmental practices (in La Cumbrecita, Villa de Merlo, Villa La Angostura y Villa Giardino). In June 2008, the development of Tourism Management Guidelines for Municipalities was agreed among the National Tourism Secretariat, the Argentine Federation of Municipalities (FAM, by its Spanish acronym), and the Secretariat of Municipal Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior. The guidelines were presented in the II National Congress on Tourism Quality in October 2009. As regards training in tourism, some universities have included subjects like quality management and management of standards in their undergraduate programs, such as the Licenciate degree in Tourism and Hotels of Universidad Argentina de la Empresa (UADE). UADE was the first Argentine university to obtain the TEDQUAL (Tourism Education Quality) international certification of educational management in tourism programs, which is awarded by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).   Finally, it must be pointed out that in December 2008 an agreement was signed in the National Tourism Secretariat between IRAM and the Forum of Tourism Professionals, in order to deliver the first national Specialization Course on Tourism Quality Management, which gave rise to this book.

CHAPTER 2 - QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM: INTRODUCTION TO STANDARD ISO 9001 IMPLEMENTATION

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Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader in the application of ISO 9001 technical standard in the field of tourism organizations. The starting point is a theoretical-conceptual framework which contains the essential definitions related to the quality management systems that appear in the ISO 9000 standard on fundamentals and vocabulary.

Later, there is a deeper analysis on ISO 9001 standard requirements, explaining the scope of each of them and interpreting them for tourism organizations, giving examples of their application. For this purpose, the IRAM 30400 standard is very relevant, "A Guide for the interpretation of ISO 9001:2000 in tourism services", which appeared in 2004 and was the first tourism sector standard in the Argentine Republic.

The intention is to submit a brief and concise –but also complete- description of the standard, so that the reader may interpret it in a better way and then implement it in the public administration and in the private sector.

Theoretical-Conceptual Framework

To introduce the subject, it is necessary to include the definition of quality, the principles of Quality Management and the Quality Virtuous Circle or PHVA.

Quality is defined in the ISO 9000 standard as "the measure in which a set of inherent characteristics satisfy requirements". This definition has already been tackled in the previous chapter; however, it is necessary to make two comments that appear as notes and that complete that concept. First, that the term "quality" may be used together with adjectives such as poor, good or excellent. Second, "inherent" means existing in something, particularly as a permanent characteristic.

Once made these comments, we shall mention the eight quality management principles that appear in ISO 9000 and that serve as the general framework of ISO 9001 requirements. These principles are:

- Customer-oriented

- Leadership

- Staff participation

- Approach based on processes

- Management system approach

- Permanent improvement

- Approach based on events for decision making purposes

- Mutually beneficial relations with the provider

Taking into account the definition of a process that appears in the previous chapter and the Deming Cycle -PVHA- the latter will be considered as a "quality virtuous circle" and each of its dimensions will be explained.

Planning:

- Choosing the right persons
- Collecting all the available information
- Understanding users/customers' needs
- Studying the process
- Developing the plan/train the persons
- *Actions:* Executing the improvements
- Collecting the appropriate data

Verification:

- Analyzing and exhibiting aimed results
- Understanding and documenting the differences
- Revising problems/Mistakes

Actions or adjustments:

- Standardizing improvements
- A better present approach is achieved
- Wide spreading
- Identifying new projects

Additionally, it should be remarked that the permanent improvement described in the "quality virtuous cycle" is supported in:

- Top management commitment and involvement

- Leadership and active commitment with the permanent improvement shown by the authorities of all levels.

- Focus on user/customer needs

- Integration of the permanent improvement process with the strategic purposes of the organization

- Establishment of a culture that fosters improvement, creativity and innovation.

- Focus on the processes identified as critical for quality

- Learning from permanent improvement results

The purposes and tasks of an organization should be expressed in measurable units that may be used to quantitatively express the attainment of these purposes and tasks, and the "Indicators" are responsible for such concretion.

In order to obtain efficient management, we need indicators, that is to say, concrete data which allow us to make decisions based on concrete events of reality and not on personal intuitions. Now we will develop what kinds of indicators we can have, their usefulness and how they may be managed.

How can an indicator be defined? It may be defined as a value that comes from the combination of critical variables of the process which impact on its quality and the optimization of the resources to obtain a product and/or service and that allows us to realize if its administration is or is not under control.

There are two big groups of indicators: performance and improvement indicators.

It is very important to remark the importance of indicators, considering the following:

- They allow to measure changes in certain conditions or situations through time.

- They help to monitor the results of initiatives or actions.

- They are very important instruments to assess our management.

- They are valuable instruments which guide us to obtain better results.

In order to define the indicators that will be taken into account for the performance measurement, it is convenient to take into account that:

- Indicators should not be ambiguous.

- They should be useful for the establishment of realistic objectives.They should derive from a simple processIt is necessary to find a balance between result indicators and performance indicators (inductors).

- They should be easily interpreted by the authorities of an inferior level and should be logically linked to the Indicators used by the superior level.

The logically and internationally accepted sequence for indicator determination and implementation is: Objective- indicator. That is to say, the indicator is considered as the numerical reflection of objectives. The process of indicator definition requires a clear determination of what to measure, how to measure, when to measure, unit of result measurement, source of measurement; and person responsible for the measurement.

Regulatory requirements of ISO 9001 technical standard

ISO 9001:2008 Standard is composed by generical requirements that must be accomplished by the organization, it is divided into eight chapters although it must be taken into account that those containing requirements to be implemented are chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Afterwards, there follows a detail of the names and main subjects of requirement chapters of ISO 9001:2008 Standard.

Chapter 4 of the Standard: General requirements and documentation requirements.

Chapter 5 of the Standard: Responsibility of top management: Policy and objectives of quality, planning and revision by top management.

Chapter 6 of the Standard: Management of resources: Human resources, infrastructure and labor environment.

Chapter 7 of the Standard: Product manufacturing: Planning, requirements, design, production, control, auxiliary processes.

Chapter 8 of the Standard: Measurement, analysis and improvement: Customer satisfaction (tourist, neighbor, user, visitor, recreationist, etc.), audits, measurement of processes, products, non conformities, corrective and preventive actions.

Below there is an analysis of each of the requirements included in these chapters.

Chapter 4: Quality management system

The essential requirements of this chapter are the preparation of the quality manual, the description of the interaction of the processes managed by the top management, the definition of a documented procedure[30] for document control and another one for registration control (the latter must not be necessarily structured in two independent documents). That is to say, in the chapter the following requirements are included:

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[30] Procedure is defined in ISO 9001 standard as the "*specific way to perform an activity or process*", that may or may not be documented.

[31] Document is defined as "*information and its supporting medium*". It may be paper; a magnetic, optical or electrical disk; photography, etc.

4.1 General requirements:

a) Identify the processes for the QMS and their application in the organization.

b) Determine their sequence and interaction

c) Determine the criteria and methods necessary to ensure that both the operation and the control of processes are efficient.

d) Ensure the availability of necessary resources and information.

e) Make the follow-up and analyze.

f) Actions to achieve the planned results and the permanent improvement.

These processes must be managed according to the standard requirements. If a process that affects product conformity is externally contracted, such process must be controlled. This means that, with respect to sub-contracted processes, the organization must show that they are under its supervision in order to ensure their conformity with regulatory requirements. The control may include, for example, requirements for the QMS supplier, in situ inspections or verifications, processes specification and/or validation as a part of the contract, audits.

4.2 Documentation requirements

4.2.1 Overview

QMS documents include:

a) Quality policy and purposes.

b) Quality manual.

c) Documented procedures in this Standard.

d) Documents required by the Organization for the efficient planning, operation and control of its processes.

e) Registers.

These requirements are completed by the following clarifications, the QMS documentation extension may differ from one organization to another and the documentation may be in any format or media.

It is very important to remark that ISO 9001 standard establishes, in its requirements chapters, that the organization will have the six following documented procedures: Document control, register control, internal audit, control of non-conforming product, corrective actions, preventive actions.

In the same way, the following registers are required, and they are administered according to the specifications of the 4.2.4 requirement:

- Reviews made by the top management,

- Education and training,

- Revision of product requirements,

- Inputs for design,

- Results of providers' assessment,

- Non-conformities,

- Corrective actions,

- Preventive actions, etc.

The following documentation levels may be considered for the quality management system:

1º level. They determine the direction of the organization, its purpose, future and general description of the system and its application.

2º level. They describe the How, Where, Who and When for the procedures required by the standard.

3º level. They describe the operation of the organization

4º level. Forms, archives and magnetic supporting media offer evidence of the actions taken.

4.2.2 Quality manual

The quality manual, defined as the "document that specifies the quality management system of an organization" should contain:

a) The scope of the System, as well as the exclusions (only requirements of chapter 7 of the standard may be excluded).

b) QMS procedures or the reference to them.

c) the description of process interaction.

4.2.3 Document control

A documented procedure is hereby established, in order to define:

a) Approval before its edition.

b) Revision and update if necessary, new approval.

c) Ensure the identification of changes and version condition.

d) Ensure that the version is available at use points.

e) Legible and identifiable

f) Identify external documents and their distribution.

g) Prevent the use of obsolete documents

As examples of documents, we can mention: the documented procedures required by ISO 9001 Standard; labor instructions, the Quality Manual; etc.

4.2.4 Control of quality registers

Likewise, the organization must have a documented procedure for register control. A register is a document that contains the obtained results or that provides evidence of the activities performed. The register control procedure must comply with the requirements and achieve an efficient operation.

The procedure must ensure the identification, legibility, storing, protection, recovery, retention time, final disposition. Examples of registers in tourism organizations (reservation forms, forms to be completed with tourism data, etc).

CHAPTER 5: Responsibility of the Top Management

This chapter deals with the commitment that must be undertaken by the top management as regards the implementation of the system. Such commitment implies:

- Establishing quality policies and objectives;

- Planning the implementation of the system;

- Defining the responsibilities and powers of all the work team;

- Ensuring that the organization takes into account customer needs in order to satisfy them;

- Ensuring compliance with internal audits;

-   Making periodical reviews of all the quality management system.

In this part of the section, some examples of fulfillment of the requirements of chapter 5 will be included.

5.1 Commitment of the Top Management

The ISO 9001 Standard refers to the commitment of the Top Management with respect to the development and implementation of the QMS and the permanent improvement of the efficiency of the quality management system.

Taking into account these aspects, the Top Management must express their commitment by communicating the importance of meeting the requirements, establishing quality policies and objectives, making reviews and ensuring resource availability.

5.2 Customer-oriented approach

With respect to this requirement of chapter 5, the standard provides that it is necessary to take into account requirement determination, requirement satisfaction and customer perception follow-up.

5.3 Quality Policy

The quality policy must comply with a set of requirements -specified in the standard- that are hereafter detailed:

-   It is fit for the purpose of the organization;

- It includes the commitment to comply with the requirements and to continuously improve the QMS efficiency;

- It provides a frame of reference to establish and revise quality objectives;

- It is communicated and understood within the organization;

- It is revised for permanent adaptation.

5.4 Planning:

Essentially, it is necessary to make reference to quality objectives which are established in the corresponding functions and levels and must be measurable, realizable, realistic, specific, limited in time and aligned with the quality policy.

Quality objectives allow to prove the level of commitment of the organization with the QMS permanent improvement. The following examples are related to tourism processes:

- 95% of user satisfaction in the current year;

- Absence of complaints with respect to the reservation process in the current year;

- Absence of incidents with respect to tourists' safety.

We should add that all these objectives must specify an amount of time for fulfillment.

Planning of the Quality management system

Within the system, planning is necessary in order to comply with the requirements mentioned in 4.1 and with the objectives and to maintain the integrity of the QMS as changes are introduced.

5.5 Responsibility, authority and communication

5.5.1 Responsibility and powers

It is necessary to comply with the definition and communication of responsibilities, the powers of offices and functions and functional interrelations.

5.5.2 Representative of the Top Management

The Top Management must appoint a representative who will be in charge of the daily control of the system and who must have the responsibility and the authority to ensure that the quality management system is implemented and operated, to report to the top management about the general functioning of the system, and to ensure the existence of awareness about customer requirements.

5.5.3 Internal communication

The top management of a tourism organization, in order to comply with this requirement, must establish convenient communication processes and take into account the QMS efficiency for its definition.

5.6 Revision by the Top Management:

The revision by the Top Management is a meeting in which the most important members of the organization and those responsible for the quality management system take part, and that is held with planned frequency for the purposes of:

Ensuring the permanent convenience, adaptation and efficiency of the quality management system.

Assessing the need for changes in the quality management system, including the quality policy and objectives.

CHAPTER 6: Resource management

This chapter deals with the way in which resources are managed, not only material or tangible ones but also human resources (organization staff). The requirements for human resources are specified below:

- The identification of the skills required for each task;

- The assessment of staff according to such previously defined skills;

- The training of staff; and

- The assessment of the efficiency of training.

Besides, there are some requirements related to infrastructure and labor environment. Through the following points, each one of them will be developed.

6.1 Provision of resources:

This is an important aspect that requires the Top Management of the organization to determine and assign resources with the purpose of implementing and keeping the quality management system, improving its efficiency and increasing customer satisfaction.

6.2 Human resources

6.2.1 Overview

As part of this point and as an introduction, it is important to remark that the first aspect to be considered is that the staff must have the necessary skills. [32]

6.2.2 Skills, awareness and training

In order to comply with this requirement, the organization must determine the necessary skills, provide the training or take other actions, assess the efficiency of the actions adopted and ensure that awareness is raised.

As regards human resources, the following must be evidenced:

- Definition of skills

- Identification of training needs

- Assessment of the efficiency of the training provided

- Ensuring that the staff become aware of the importance of their activities.

Records be kept to objectively demonstrate that the organization takes into account and complies with the content of the requirement.

6.3 Infrastructure

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[32] See, as a supplement, the article of this book about labor skills.

The infrastructure should be considered in relation to the fulfillment of the requirement and to product conformity, taking into account buildings, work spaces and associated services, equipment for the processes (hardware/software) and support services (transport/communication).

6.4 Labor environment

The labor environment should be considered as one of the necessary conditions to achieve conformity with product requirements. These conditions may be physical ones, hygiene, noise, vibrations, pollution, human ones, heat, light, ergonomics, social interaction.

CHAPTER 7: Product manufacturing

Chapter 7 of ISO 9001 standard refers to the operative processes used for the manufacturing (production) of the product/service, in this case, a tourism one.

The requirements that will be submitted are related to service planning, customer-related processes determining basically their explicit or implicit requirements, determining the requirements of the organization itself and legal and regulatory ones, confirming sale conditions before the sale is effected.

Afterwards, it is necessary to consider all the requirements related to design and development, to purchases (where providers must be periodically assessed) ; the production and rendering of the service; and the monitoring of the follow-up and measurement devices.

We should remark that this chapter is the only one where some requirements may be excluded, provided that the exclusion is duly justified.

7.1 Product manufacturing planning

Manufacturing planning involves establishing:

- Quality objectives.

- Product requirements

- The needs of:

- Processes;

- Documents;

- Resources.

- Verification, validation, follow-up, inspection and test activities.

- Registers.

7.2 Customer-related processes

7.2.1 Determination of product-related requirements; and

7.2.2 Revision of product-related requirements.

At this point, it is necessary to define customer requirements, which may be the following with respect to a tourism information office: Providing a good service and the requested information; or with respect to rural accommodation, offering the promoted services at a price adjusted to said services.

Later, it is necessary to determine the way of ensuring compliance with these conditions; for example, providing services in line with prices, training the staff to provide a good service, etc.

Last, it is necessary to determine how to measure services; for example, through the use of polls.

The requirements to take into account and consider are those specified by the customer (including those related to delivery and post-sale), those not specified by the customer but necessary for the expected use, legal and regulatory ones and any additional requirement determined by the organization.

7.2.3 Communication with customers

The following must be considered: Information about the product, handling of questions, contracts and requests (including modifications) and customer feedback, including complaints.

7.3 Design and Development

Design and development requirements will not be explained due to space reasons, although the section includes the following:

7.3.1 Design and development planning.

Inputs for design and development,

7.3.3 – Design and development results.

7.3.3 – Design and development revision.

7.3.5 – Verification of design and development.

7.3.6 – Design and development validation.

7.3.7 – Control of changes related to design and development.

7.4 Purchases

7.4.1 Purchase process

The kind and scope of the control applied to the provider and the input will depend on the impact on the final product. To comply with this requirement, criteria must be established for the selection, assessment and reassessment of providers, keeping registers of the results of such assessments.

7.4.2 Reporting the purchases

The provider must be informed about the requirements for the approval of the product, procedures, processes and equipment, staff qualification and quality management system.

The appropriateness of the requirements must be ensured before informing the provider.

7.4.3 Verification of purchased products.

Inspections and other activities are conducted to verify that the purchased supply complies with the specified requirements. Likewise, purchase information must include provisions about possible inspections at provider facilities.

Critical providers must be listed, that is to say, those providers that sell the most important products or services, as food providers for a restaurant or hotels for a travel agency, etc.

7.5.- Service provision and production:

7.5.1.- Control of production and rendering of services.

Here it is necessary to consider:

- The availability of information about product characteristics;

- The availability of work instructions;

- Use of appropriate equipment;

- Availability and use of measurement and follow-up equipment;

- Implementation of measurement and follow-up activities;

- Implementation of release, delivery and post-sale activities.

7.5.2 Validation of production processes and rendering of services

In case the result cannot be verified through a measurement criteria must be established to:

- Revise and approve processes;

- approve equipment and staff qualifications;

- use specific methods and procedures;

- keep registries;

- revalidate.

As an example, we can say that a tourism information office must validate the information that it delivers before doing so (ensure the truthfulness of what it says); or that a travel agency must validate the services that it provides (accommodation, transfers and excursions) before selling them.

7.5.- Service production and provision

7.5.3 Identification and traceability.

Identification and traceability refer to the identification through proper means, and the identification of the condition of the product with respect to measurement and follow-up requirements. In the case of a requirement, to control and register the "unique identification" of the product.

7.5.- Service production and provision

7.5.4 Customer property.

The organization must identify, verify, protect and preserve the property of the customer; and in case of loss or damage that make it unfit for use it must register the information and communicate the event to the customer.

Customer property may include copyrights.

7.5.5 Product preservation

Preserving product conformity during the internal process and delivery in its destination includes the following aspects: identification, handling, packaging, storing and delivery.

7.6 Control of follow-up and measurement devices.

Ensuring that measurement and follow-up activities that evidence product conformity may be carried out and are consistent with the requirements. For this purpose, the following must be complied with:

- Calibrating at defined intervals (or before use) according to national or international patterns;

- Adjusting or re-adjusting if necessary;

- Identifying (status of calibration);

- Protecting against adjustments which may invalidate the results;

- Protecting against damages during the handling or storing;

- Registering calibration results.

- Assessing the validity of results in the case of non conforming equipment;

- Confirming the capacity of information technology programs.

Chapter 8: Measurement, analysis and improvement

Chapter 8 deals with continued improvement of the organization. The main question here is: ¿How is such improvement managed? According to the requirements of ISO 9001 Standard, this is achieved through the analysis of data obtained from indicators, making the relevant follow-up and measurements (both of processes and products); measuring our customers' perception (generally through polls); performing internal audits; among other actions.

And if there is a deviation, generally when a mistake is made, it is necessary not only to solve it, but also to analyze the causes, so as to avoid its repetition, then verifying the effectiveness of actions. This process must be followed not only in case of non conformity, but also when analyzing potential non conformities, in order to prevent problems before they occur.

8.1 Overview.

Planning measurement, follow-up, analysis and improvement   activities   in order to show product conformity, ensure the conformity of the quality management system and continuously improve efficiency.

This includes the determination of applicable statistical methods and techniques.

8.2 Measurement and follow-up

8.2.1 Customer satisfaction.

Methods to obtain and use information about customer perception of compliance with requirements. Among such methods, there are different polls: mail polls, telephone polls, others (quantitative measurement); market research; registering opinions at product delivery.

8.2.2 Internal audit

ISO 9001 standard requires the organization to have a documented procedure for the performance of internal audits. The purpose of the internal audit is to determine if the quality management system complies with the planned activities and requirements and if it has been implemented and efficiently operated.

The audit program and the criteria that will govern the development of the process must be planned. Auditors must be impartial and objective.

After the submission of audit results, the organization must take actions with respect to detected non conformities.

8.2.3 Process follow-up and measurement.

Measurement and follow-up are taken into account to show the capacity of processes   to attain the planned results.

8.2.4 Product measurement and follow-up.

The organization must verify that the product complies with the requirements and give evidence of conformity (registers).

Additionally, a product may not be released before satisfactorily complying with planned activities.

8.3 Control of a non conforming product

To control of a non conforming product, the standard requires having a documented procedure that includes controls, responsibilities and authorities, taking into account the possibility of:

- Taking actions to eliminate non conformity;
- Authorizing use under concession;
- Taking actions to prevent use;
- After the corrections, re-verifying;
- Registers both of the nature of non conformities and of the actions taken.

8.4 Data analysis

To determine, compile and analyze the appropriate data in order to show the adequacy and efficiency of the QMS.

Data analysis must provide information about customer satisfaction, conformity with product requirements, processes/products characteristics and trends, suppliers.

8.5 Improvement

8.5.1 Continued improvement

Here it is important to consider that the efficiency of the management system must be continuously improved.

8.5.2 Corrective actions

ISO 9001 standard requires -for this paragraph- a documented procedure that includes:

- Revising non conformities (including claims);

- Determining the causes of non conformities;

- Assessing the need to take actions to avoid repetition;

- Determining and implementing necessary actions;

- Registering the results of actions taken;

- Revising corrective actions taken.

8.5.3 Preventive actions.

The organization must have a documented procedure that includes the following actions:

- Determining potential non conformities and their causes;

- Assessing the need to act in order to prevent non conformities;

- Determining and implementing necessary actions;

- Registering the results of actions taken;

- Revising preventive actions taken.

ISO 9001 standard, in this case, provides that in case of a non desired event, not only the problem must be solved but also the cause must be attacked to prevent repetition; and later verify the efficiency of the actions taken.

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

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Tourism Policy: The case of Argentina

It may be affirmed that the link between Politics and Tourism suffers from the vicissitudes proper of any present scientific confluence. That is to say: the meeting of an ancient science: Political Science (with its heritage of concepts, values, resources, etc.) with a new knowledge: Tourism. In this sense, it is not strange to verify that the doubts and questions presented a priori have not been very different from those posed in the relationships Politics/Information Science, Politics/Genetics, Politics/Environment, etc.

For this reason, we have felt urged to reflect on both concepts in order to underline the special characteristics of Tourism and ratify –or not- the arcane notions of politics or renew its contradictions and so clarify its relationship with the phenomenon to which it is supposedly linked.

In this sense, we think that the case of Argentina may be symptomatic of a practice that appears to be generalized in Latin American countries. The intuitive urgency to reformulate a tourism system that is supposed to be insufficient (and that perhaps actually is) without exhausting the minimum critical reflection on it. That is to say, to change without knowing exactly why, how or in what direction and, in consequence, to bear the adjustments that finally duplicate the political and social effort. However, there are not only shadows in the horizon. There are some lights -the product of a new awareness

on the tourism phenomenon- that are opening their way and should be remarked.

Politics

In the free association of ideas, if somebody asks "What is it that we call Politics?" We would obtain the most dissimilar opinions; some would affirm that it is a Science, other ones would say that it is an Art, others would link it with militancy, etc.

In the opinion of Prelot, Politics is a concept that could be built both from the history of the word and from the history of ideas. So, some of its numerous meanings may be deduced from its Greek origin: polis, politeia, política, politike.

But even avoiding these subtle details, it is evident that when we speak about Politics we are referring both to knowledge and to an activity. In this sense, when we refer to the politics of a country we may be speaking about its ideological system (capitalist, socialist, etc) or about a set of measures adopted for a determined area or problem (British foreign policy, for example) In other words, we could be considering the strategical or the tactical dimension of politics. Following Beaufre's ideas[34] and understanding the strategy as a vision of the world directed to use the resources necessary to attain the purposes and interests of the Nation and the tactics as the derived measures that would allow to achieve them in a medium or long term.

When he speaks about Political Science, Aristotle [35] describes it as a sovereign Science: "Indeed, it determines which are the sciences that are necessary in the cities and which ones are those to be learned by each citizen and to what

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[33] Prelot, Marcel. *La Ciencia Política*. Eudeba, Bs. As. 1997.
[34] Beaufre, Andre. *Estrategia de la accion*. Ed. Pleamar. Bs. As. 1982.
[35] Aristóteles. *Etica a Nicómaco*. Eudeba, Bs. As. 1999.

extent. Or cannot we see that the most precious powers are beneath it, as strategy, domestic economics and rethorics? Since politics takes advantage of the other practical sciences and legislates about what must be done and what must be avoided, its purpose embraces the purposes of all the other sciences, and is by excellence the human welfare". Although it is true that politics as knowledge underlines its ordering, architectonic, constructive condition, it cannot be ignored and it is not less true that politics as an activity is based on an opposite will, on a will and struggle to attain the power as an element of the Government. And in this sense we believe and agree with some authors that[36] politics is the art of making possible the necessary things. Where the latter (necessary things) come from political principles founded on a determined vision of the world with the intention of achieving them.

Now, the axis of this activity comes from the definition of "objectives and interests" where the former are usually defined in the constitutional or founding text with a certain perennial intent, while the latter are expressions that represent the collective will of a people at a certain moment and that, although they have certain temporary stability, they could vary from one decade to another. As an example: To lead a determined regional block, to share seabeds, to participate in the development of a determined kind of technology, etc.

Therefore, politics is an art and a governing technique aimed at improving living conditions for a better development of Man. Politics so understood is the prudent concern or practical theoretical interest in Common Welfare.

The State, a fundamental actor in the relationship that we try to elucidate is a key factor for the comprehension of Politics in any of its dimensions.

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[36] Llerena Amadeo, Juan R and Ventura E. *El orden político*. AZ Bs. As. 1983.

Unfortunately, as the Latin root of the State: "status" does not offer many clues about its sense; some have preferred to quote Jean Dabin who affirmed that usage had consecrated the word to the concept of "supreme political group".

As a politically organized community, the State has three elements: Territory, Population and Power, and they are closely linked by a common culture that transforms such union in something more than the sum of its parts.

This reality is verified when any State is considered and "mental maps" are overcome. Because maps prove to be exactly that, mere bi-dimensional[37] representations that oppose a dynamic and polyhedral reality that is projected to the water and the space. Reality that is verified when entering in contact with its population, its habits, its faith, its codes, its living conditions and its history. Reality that is verified in the "imperius" and "auctoritas" of the State. That is to say, this Imperium includes: its capacity to order the reality, both in terms of force and in terms of cultural and economic heritage. And Auctoritas includes the minimum consensus necessary for the perception of the legitimacy of the majority.

Law integrates with State policy in a subordinated and coordinated way on the basis of a twofold function: Ideological and Instrumental. As regards the first one, it reflects the will of the so-called constituent power, understood as the capacity and competence to issue the fundamental law. As regards the second one, it allows to articulate the order, the architecture, the basic structure of State organization in a set of legal rules. These rules are distinguished from the rest of the rules (religious, moral, etc.) because their condition or antecedent is followed by a consequence or sanction that, ultimately, may be coercive but always reserved to state bodies.

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[37] Ortiz, Tulio. *Política y Estado*. 2nd. Ed. Editorial Estudio. Bs. As. 1996.

Tourism

The term "Tourism" also has its philological and conceptual difficulties. A "tour" is basically a circular trip, a return to the origin. Historically linked to two ages: The Middle Ages with its religious "peregrinations" (Example: Santiago de Compostela) and the Renaissance with the trips that the English nobility members made with educational purposes through European capital cities.[38] So, it is possible to affirm that the first tourism has been religious and cultural. Mexican authors underline the French possibilities of the word "tour" as derived from the Latin "tornare".[39] In any case, the roots "tour" and "turn" derived from "tornus" (turn, etc) as noun and "tornate" as verb added to the suffix "ist", "ism" reveal the underlying idea.[40]

To travel is to know and each tourist chooses the trip that best adjusts to his/her needs and expectations. So, Tourism is in this sense an experience-based activity: discovering another people, another landscape, another culture, another history. It is to prefer the original event to its report. Expressed in these terms, the mere act of anonymous consumption is not at all significant; instead, to absorb something from another person is a step, an "Easter" from the surface to the essential matters. In wider terms, it may be simply understood as the set of human interactions (transport, accommodation, service, etc.) derived from the temporary shift of tourists.[41]

But while tourism may be defined by and for the tourist, it may and must also be defined for the rest of the actors.

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[38] Lickorish, Leonard J y Jenkins, Carson L. *Una introducción al Turismo*. Editorial Síntesis. Madrid 1997.

[39] Ortuño Martinez, Manuel. *Introducción al estudio del Turismo.* Textos Universitarios México 1966, p. 25. Quoted by: Ramírez Blanco, Manuel. *Teoria General del Turismo.* 2nd. Ed. México 1994

[40] Fernández Fuster, Luis. *Teoría y Técnica del Turismo*. Editora Nacional, Colección Mundo Científico Serie Turismo Madrid 1967, p. 21. Quoted by: Ramírez Blanco, Manuel. Teoria General del Turismo. 2da. Ed. México 1994.

[41] Spinelli Sara M. *Terminología Turística y Hotelera*. Ed. Corregidor Bs. As. 1990.

In other words, for a hotel chain or a travel agency "tourism" is the object of their business; for a State it is an industry; instead, for an International Organization as the UNWTO[42] it is a set of phenomena that must be registered.

In this sense, for an operator the definition of tourism is limited to "the combination of the different elements used in trips"[43] with the intention of obtaining a profit. Instead, States prefer to think about it as a good that generates money, a complex activity that involves different sectors of the economy. And when we speak about "Active Tourism" [44] we refer to the income of money reflected in the credit side of the Balance of payments of a country.

In the definition of the UNWTO: "Tourism includes the activities performed by persons during their trips and stays in places different from habitual ones, during an uninterrupted period shorter than a year, with recreational, business or other purposes."[45]

As it is evident, none of the previous definitions may be considered as absolute, since Tourism is a bidimensional phenomenon, being a personal experience on one side and a cross-cutting activity on the other; so, in this aspect, its concept is functionally built.

And although politics must not forget the original sense of Tourism because it contributes to the essence of its sustainability, it is only logical that it should underscore its collective aspects.

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[42] www.world-tourism.org

[43] Petra, Nicolae. *Las agencias de viajes y de turismo*. Editorial Diana. México 1993.

[44] Wallingre, Noemí y Toyos, Monica. *Diccionario de Turismo, Hoteleria y Transportes*. Bs. As. 1998.

[45] OMT. *Introducción al Turismo*. Madrid, 1998.

Logically, even this last definition given by the UNWTO has multiple observations; so, for example, is it possible to consider as tourism the volume of persons that moves every day through the region of the so-called "triple frontier" (Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina)? What must be understood by "habitual"? How is it possible to make valid measurements if the economic resources that I use as a tourist are obtained from the place I am visiting?, etc. In any case, this conceptualization, together with the Satellite Account project, has proved to be an efficient instrument to measure the richness generated by the tourism flux.[46]

It is also evident that Tourism in social terms is not good or bad in itself. It is a phenomenon that may generate both positive and negative aspects that should be assessed at the time of establishing a tourism policy in any of the sectors on which it may have impact: Economy, Culture, Environment, etc.

The Tourism Policy:

Who are those responsible for building a Tourism Policy?

If our first reply was simply the Government we would be in an insurmountable deadlock. The tourism policy may and must be implemented by the Government but it is built at a grassroots level; successful projects of tourism destinations have been based on the formation of tourism awareness by the whole community. This awareness-raising must be accompanied by a private sector with permanent training. Training that allows it to break the old mass and rigid paradigm of the Fordian school and compete in a flexible market that is segmented and fully integrated in all its areas. Here, the role of the public sector is essential not only as a regulator but also as an educator and facilitator.

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[46] UNWTO. *General Guidelines directed to the tourism national administrations (ANT, by its Spanish acronym) in relation with the development of the Tourism Satellite Account (CST, by its Spanish acronym). Madrid. February, 2002.*

Why is a Tourism Policy necessary?

The following are only some of the reasons:

a) First, due to something that derives from the previous affirmations: its complexity. It is a cross-cutting activity that does not leave room for improvising.

b) Because risks derived from the absence of planning will necessarily translate into the negative economic, cultural and/or environmental effects that we have mentioned,

c) Because the new paradigm of tourism poses the need of defining new segments, of serving a very well informed user, of competing in a global scenario, etc.

d) Because the Government must reconcile market freedom with the preservation of its cultural and natural heritage,

e) because the objective is not increasing the quantity of tourists but building sustainable tourism.

How?

Having understood both terms of the relationship, it is evident that there cannot (or must not) be an isolated "Tourism Policy", presented as one more sector in the distribution of ministries or as an isolated compartment. In any case, it should reflect a wider National Policy, even more so if we take into account the sector projections; it should be an important item in the consideration of any serious government policy (beyond specific governmental circumstances).

Now, what do we mean when we say "Tourism Policy"? Are we referring to its bases? Not really, because they must be sought in the National Policy, in the

Great Strategy; Are we referring to a mere list of actions? No, we are referring to 1) the plan for the sector and how it has been formulated, 2) the structure from which it will be implemented, 3) the resources and 4) finally, the general and legal rules that will provide a framework for the sector.

A plan implies thinking, a plan implies setting short-, medium- and long-term goals, a plan is not conceived for one or two or fifteen election periods but for fifteen or twenty years (or more, if the stability of the political system allows it). A plan is not a list of actions but a description of intentions; in any case, the actions will be the consequences.

If a plan intends to be effective, it must be vertically imposed. If it also intends to be efficient, it must be horizontally built. A plan which is not based on consensus, not technically validated, may begin to be executed but will fail as soon as its promoters fall.

The structure must reflect the political will to plan, so that if I plan to simplify management, marketing, or access systems and afterwards I create a bureaucratic structure full of administrative difficulties and obstacles, the plan will fail; in the same way, if I have an excellent planning and an agile structure but I lack the necessary resources, all the effort will have been in vain.

It is good to keep in mind two concepts that are institutionally applied to provinces or agencies: Autonomy (auto nomos) is etymologically derived from the power to issue one's own rules; autarchy, instead, is related to the power of self-government (archei: government). Both concepts may be applied to the provincial situation because provinces, as political units, reserve for themselves

all the power not delegated to the Nation and preclude the federal government from choosing their local authorities.[47]

In countries such as the United States, Sweden or Canada where there exists great corporate soundness, the government has given up its federal tourism agencies, only keeping some regulatory and control powers for lower authorities. Logically, this does not mean that the government is not concerned or does not make any investments, but rather that there is not a specific national agency. Another possibility is to plan the tourism organization based on a centralized agency with (perhaps) some representation in the destinations. And, finally, there is the possibility of a decentralized agency by territory (For example, Argentina or Spain) or by Products (Mountains, Beaches, Snow), Regions, etc… In turn, these agencies may be only public, private, mixed or mixed with a public sector majority and viceversa. Their work may be developed in a completely independent way from other countries or within the framework of some form of regional integration. The hiring scheme is very variable. There may be a majority of career employees with the exception of senior political offices, or a majority of political offices with a few career offices or a totality of public offices of the public administration.

Regardless of the model (centralized or not), its main function must be aligned with existing Tourism Policy objectives; this means that, with the available resources, it will try to improve the sector competitiveness by setting national goals, doing research, making statistics, publishing and promoting, coordinating regional efforts, regulating, supervising and establishing stricter quality standards.

Due to its cross-cutting nature, on many occasions there are specific coordination agencies that belong to national ministries or to provincial,

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[47] Colautti, Carlos E. *Derecho Constitucional*. Ed. Universidad Bs. As. 1996.

regional or local bodies, but that have a linking function between the public and private sector, or else merely promotional functions.

Financial resources may be directly provided through budget appropriations or by *ad hoc* collecting accounts, which may be supplemented or not by tax exemptions and/or subsidies, loans at a differential interest rate, investment guarantees, labor licenses, availability of technical advice, or by promoting the training and hiring of staff in exchange for reduced social security contributions, etc.

Finally, we understand that the plan, its preparation, the means to implement it and transparency when obtaining resources must be thought for different scenarios (International, International Regional, National, Regional Provincial, Provincial and Municipal), sustained and coordinated on the basis of legality. That is what we call Tourism Policy.

7 The Argentine Tourism Policy

Unsurprisingly, the Argentine tourism policy has been historically affected by the ups and downs of national politics, with a succession of more or less lackluster administrations and few achievements, following temporary exchange rate arrangements rather than serious and rational planning at a national level.

Hence, let us describe the political framework within which the Argentine tourism policy is applied, in order to make a combined analyses of the core elements that compose it: (plan, structure, resources and regulation), in relation to the present administration.

The Argentine tourism system is a faithful reflection of the federal republican system, and, as such, it is formed by two clear-cut sectors: public and private.

The public sector is decentralized and operates in three jurisdictional levels: National, Provincial, and Municipal or Local. There exist three typical relationships among these levels: A) Subordination: Under the consistency principle arising from federal unity and supremacy

B) Participation: to acknowledge collaboration among provinces regarding decisions taken by the federal government, and

C) Coordination: through the distribution and allocation of powers to avoid overlapping. [48] Hence, tourism regulations, as those of other activities, derive from the division of powers, and are thus subject to the individual rules that arise from judicial decisions, general rules issued by the legislative power and specific rules proposed by the executive power, the enforcement authority (Tourism Secretariat) responsible for the area or any other relevant governmental agency. Also, as it is a cross-cutting activity, it may be subject to customs-, migration- and police-related rules.

The 2016 Pfets plan
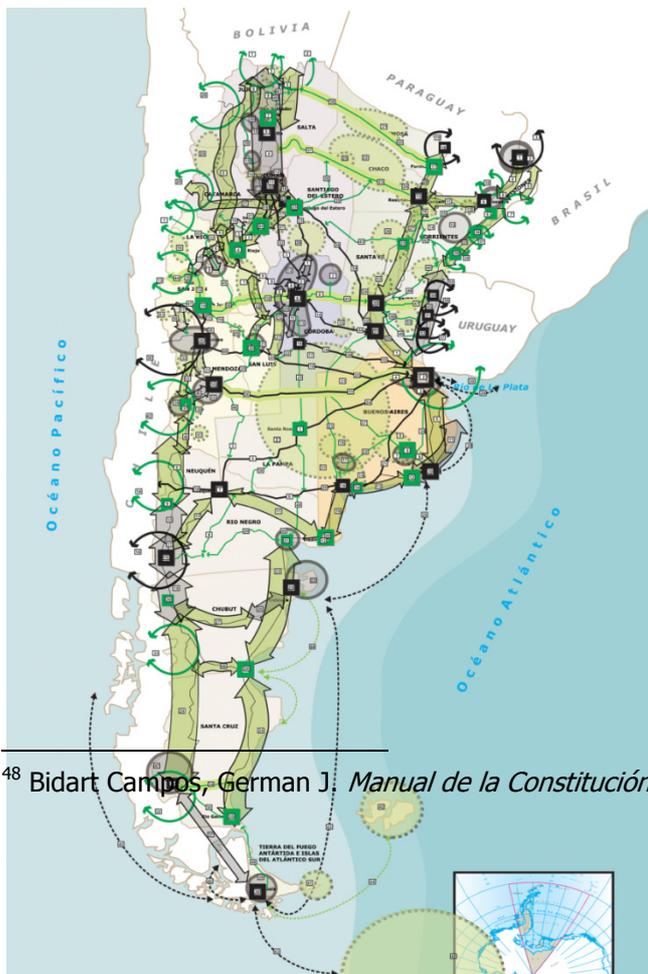
The Federal Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism (PFETS, by its Spanish acronym) has been developed collectively, over two years (2004-2005), on the basis of consensus and participation, and through regional workshops including the public, private and academic sectors.

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[48] Bidart Campos, German J. *Manual de la Constitución reformada T I*. Bs. As. Ediar 1998.

It then became a process to guide and articulate actions that synergically reaffirm political will and redirect resources towards an agreed model of sustainable tourism development. Every region defined their SWOT analysis and the corridors, circuits, and new proposals to be strengthened or developed by 2011 and 2016. This can be observed on the attached map.

The vision of turning Argentina into one of the best positioned countries in the region rested on two pillars: A) Diversity in Supply and B) Service Quality. Of course, these pillars were based on a balanced territorial development, respectful of inhabitants' identity and habitats.

The EMP

The Country Brand Strategy (EMP, by its Spanish Acronym) is an interdisciplinary and cross-sector governmental policy intended to consolidate the country's image at a national and international level, with a view to increasing exports, tourism and investment from abroad, and spreading all forms of our culture.

Conceived in 5 stages (Foundation, Consensus, Design, Transition and Institutionalization), the brand is one of the resources that form part of the strategy aimed at positioning Argentine products and services abroad. The wavy shapes convey dynamism, change and transformation, and give warmth to the design, by referring to an organic form (wave). The colors: Blue and light blue refer to our national colors. Grey (a neutral color) is associated with elegance, modernity, innovation and technology. The common starting point and separation of the waves convey diversity in unity. Their minimalist and abstract style conveys modernity and youth.

National Public Level

At the national level, the supreme authority is the Tourism Secretariat[49], which operates within the scope of the Production Ministry together with the Agriculture Secretariat and the Industry, Commerce and SMEs Secretariat pursuant to Decree 2025/08. The act that originally created the Secretariat was passed in 1958 (Act N° 14474). It was amended on several occasions, regulated in 1987 by Decree 1912, and finally superseded and perfected by a bill introduced by the Executive Power and later enacted as Act N° 25997[50]. This Act, after defining tourism as a socioeconomic, strategic and priority activity for national development and establishing the principles that underlie the activity (facilitation, social development, sustainable development, quality, competitiveness and accessibility), describes the role of the Secretariat as follows:

Duties:

"a) Establishing national tourism policies in order to plan, program, promote, train, preserve, protect, foster investment and development within the context of a strategic federal plan;

b) Proposing regulations concerning tourism activities, products and services. Said regulations shall be subject to consultation with the Federal Tourism Council and the Argentine Chamber of Tourism;

c) Coordinating, incentivizing and boosting activities to promote tourism in our country, both at the national and the international level;

d) Controlling compliance with regulations and such other supplementary rules as may be issued from time to time;

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[49] www.turismo.gov.ar
[50] Decree 2 of January 5, 2005.

e) Arranging the review of provisions or actions that prevent or hamper the development of tourism;

f) Preparing the investment and public works plan related to the tourism sector;

g) Fixing rates and prices for the services provided in connection with social and recreational tourism in the tourism units controlled by the Secretariat; as well as for products sold by said units, in order to perform related activities;

h) Fostering tourism exchange, promotion and dissemination through multilateral agreements with other countries or agencies, in order to increase and incentivize inbound tourism in our country and/or region;

i) Surveying and auditing enterprises that receive grants from the National Government, as well as invested funds, that involve tourism attractions and/or products;

j) Encouraging research, training, and technical and professional education related to the sector;

k) Promoting tourism awareness in the population;

l) Preparing its annual work plan and general budget, and estimating self-generated resources provided for herein;

m) Administering the National Tourism Fund.

And Powers:

a) Agreeing on the limits of tourism regions, areas, corridors, circuits and products with the relevant provinces, municipalities and/or the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires;

b) Providing for the development of enterprises of interest for the tourism sector, affording economic support for the execution of public works, and the acquisition of tourism equipment and infrastructure, in collaboration with the relevant province, municipality or the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires;

c) Building and/or managing, by itself or through concessions, tourism infrastructure and/or equipment and/or promotion services;

d) Managing and/or granting loans to build, enlarge or refurbish the items mentioned in (c) above and to pay debts arising therefrom under such conditions as may be established, prior agreement with the relevant provinces, municipalities and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, as the case may be;

e) Promoting actions aimed at introducing incentives to encourage investment in the Argentine Republic;

f) Entering into agreements with national or foreign private or public companies or institutions concerning all actions intended to fulfill the scope and aims of this Act, including the establishment of promotion offices abroad;

g) Designing, promoting and developing a special loan system in order to foster tourism development in the country;

h) Promoting, coordinating, and providing assistance and information to educational institutions devoted to training professionals and qualified staff in the tourism sector;

i) Organizing and participating in congresses, conferences or like events, together with the provinces, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, business organizations, representative academic institutions and/or foreign organizations;

j) Subsidizing official tourism entities of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and provinces that adhere to subsection (b) herein through agreements made with the relevant governments;

k) Ordering, in such a manner as it may deem convenient, and with a view to encouraging tourism promotion, the preparation, distribution and exhibition of promotional material;

l) Making agreements with any centralized or decentralized governmental areas intended to improve the enforcement hereof;

m) Making available such amounts as may be necessary to organize congresses and visits of foreign personalities related to the tourism sector;

n) Developing and implementing training, information, awareness-raising, promotion and prevention strategies in order to disseminate tourism activities;

o) Handling organization, planning, collaboration and economic contributions to facilitate the country's participation in tourism fairs, exhibitions, congresses or like events;

p) Fostering the inclusion of cross-cutting tourism contents in the curricula of all levels of public and private schools."

Notwithstanding the foregoing list, the new Act –based on the principles of sustainability, development, quality, accessibility, etc.– has made it clear that even if the National Secretariat is entrusted with wide powers, they will not be sufficient without a specific structure.

Therefore, it has created new agencies and has modified the role and scope of existing agencies. A new INTERMINISTERIAL COMMISSION ON TOURISM FACILITATION is created, as an interinstitutional instance aimed at coordinating and ensuring compliance with the administrative functions of national public entities related to the tourism sector and working in favor of the sustainable development of the country and its competitiveness, with the aim of "finding, handling, coordinating and solving such administrative issues as may arise in relation to tourism activities and the jurisdiction of two or more agencies of the Public Administration, in order to collaborate with the National Tourism Secretariat in the fulfillment of its duties and powers".

The Act also legitimates the FEDERAL TOURISM COUNCIL, an agency that was created several years ago by decree but that has proved to be fit for achieving provincial representativeness in national decisions. Said Council's aims are "to examine and pronounce on matters related to the organization, coordination, planning, promotion, legislation and strategies involved in federal tourism activities". Among other roles, the Council is granted powers "to participate in the preparation of tourism development policies and plans put forward by the

Enforcement Authority", and "to promote the establishment of tourism areas, corridors and circuits in provinces that can develop common tourism integration, promotion and development policies".

Powers originally granted to the Secretariat are broken down through the creation of the NATIONAL TOURISM PROMOTION INSTITUTE, whose aim is "to develop and implement plans, programs and strategies to promote inbound international tourism and products directly related thereto, as well as the tourism image of the country abroad". The Institute shall be chaired by the head of the Enforcement Authority (the Tourism Secretariat) and shall have a board formed by the members mentioned below or their deputies, with the Chairman and the board performing their duties on a *pro-bono* basis: One (1) Chairman and five (5) members appointed by the National Tourism Secretariat; three (3) members appointed by the private sector; three (3) members appointed by the Federal Tourism Council. Should there be a tie, the Chairman shall have two votes. The Institute's duties include: designing annual plans, programs and priorities aimed at tourism promotion and implementing the international promotion and marketing strategy in order to create, strengthen and support the image of Argentina as a tourism brand and destination; conducting research and studies related to the fulfillment of its objectives; organizing and participating in fairs, conferences, exhibitions and other promotional events, prioritizing those held in foreign countries; editing, preparing and developing all advertising and promotional actions and materials needed to fulfill its objectives; providing assistance to its members concerning opportunities and characteristics of foreign markets.

The new Act also deals with the issue of resources, and describes the composition of the National Tourism Fund, which includes:

a) Amounts allocated thereto by the National Administration Budget;

b) FIVE PERCENT (5%) of the total amount obtained from outbound air, sea and river tickets sold or issued in the country, as established by regulations, or sold or issued abroad for Argentine residents for trips departing from our national territory;   (previously distorted by former Menemist Ministry of Economy Domingo F. Cavallo, who diverted the funds to his own ministry);

c) Donations and bequests to the National Government with tourism purposes, except when the donor expresses the will to give the property to a specific jurisdiction;

d) Contributions made by provincial governments, municipalities, governmental agencies, and development committees (*comisiones de fomento*);

e) Interest, late charges, fines and all other money sanctions arising from the non-fulfillment of the provisions herein and from national Acts that regulate tourism activities;

f) Rates collected in connection with the authorizations required to render tourism services;

g) The trading of securities issued by the National Executive Power in order to foster tourism;

h) Amounts obtained from the sale of publications and other advertising material produced or sold by the enforcement authority of this Act;

i) Amounts obtained from the sale, lease or concession of property owned or administered by the enforcement authority, as the case may be;

j) National taxes and contributions that have been legally assigned to foster, promote and support tourism infrastructure, equipment and services;

k) Funds arising from services rendered to third parties and concessions;

l) All other amounts collected by the enforcement authority for any other purpose.

m) This fund shall be available for ten (10) years as from the enactment hereof.

The Act has also incorporated incentives and investments. Regarding incentives, it provides that: "The Enforcement Authority created hereunder, together with other relevant governmental agencies, may grant allowances and incentives to promote programs and projects of interest for the tourism sector. To such purposes, priority initiatives shall include those that have the following goals: genuine job creation; use of national raw materials and/or inputs; increase in tourism demand; balanced development of national tourism supply; promotion of sustainability; research and specialization in tourism-related areas; any other purpose that, in the Enforcement Authority's opinion, is intended to further the aims of this Act." The Act adds that "the Government shall provide for the fostering, development, research, promotion, dissemination, preservation and control of tourism activities throughout the territory of the Argentine Republic, by granting tax and credit benefits similar to those granted to the industrial sector". As regards investment, the Act creates a NATIONAL TOURISM INVESTMENT PROGRAM which includes investments in the tourism sector to be funded by the National Government. Provinces shall send their proposed

projects to the Enforcement Authority to facilitate general investments in the tourism sector. The Enforcement Authority shall pronounce on the convenience and viability of said projects pursuant to the National Public Investment Act, as amended and supplemented. Before submitting the National Tourism Investment Program, selected projects shall be included therein, and the Program shall be forwarded to the Federal Tourism Council.

Public Provincial and Municipal Level

Most provinces preexisted the Argentine Republic, and so, under section 121 of the National Constitution: "...[they] reserve to themselves all the powers not delegated to the Federal Government by this Constitution, as well as those powers expressly reserved to themselves by special pacts at the time of their incorporation." However, they have other powers, as stated in section 122: "They determine their own local institutions and are governed by them. "(...) They elect their governors, legislators, and other provincial officers, without intervention of the federal government". Applied to the tourism sector, this means not only that each province may create a suitable enforcement authority to manage the sector but also that it may and must define said authority's status and membership. Thus, for example, just as the National Government believes the enforcement authority must be a Secretariat that reports directly to the Executive Power; the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires[51] believes said authority must be an Under-Secretariat; the province of Tierra del Fuego may deem it necessary to create a Ministry; and the province of Mendoza may create Ministry of Tourism and Culture[52]. [53]

This definition can also be applied to lower levels, through a delegation of power by municipalities, pursuant to section 123: "Each province enacts its own Constitution as stated in Section 5, ensuring municipal autonomy and ruling its scope and content regarding institutional, political, administrative, economic and financial aspects." Thus, in the Municipality of Palpala, province of Jujuy, the tourism policy is

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[51] www.buenosaires.gov.ar
[52] www.tierradelfuego.gov.ar
[53] www.mendoza.gov.ar

implemented by a Department,[54] whereas the municipality of San Martín de los Andes,[55] province of Neuquén, has a specific secretariat linked to the Cultural area.

Given the relevant possibilities and despite some exceptions, it can be affirmed that the management model that seems to be gaining momentum -both at the provincial and municipal level- is the "autarkic body". The most recent case has been the province of Tucumán, where the tourism area is linked to the provincial executive power through the Ministry of Productive Development. The province's vision of how the sector is composed is defined as follows: "There are several participants in the tourism sector: the private sector, the public sector and a mixed sector. The public sector is formed by the Autarkic Body *Tucumán Turismo* and other agencies that are linked to it, as well as by other bodies of the Provincial Government whose roles are related to tourism, tourists or infrastructure. The mixed sector is formed by the Interinstitutional Tourism Council. In the private sector we find the Tourism Chamber, trade unions that represent the sector, tourism services providers, existing tourism promotion and development associations and like organizations to be created in the future." The powers granted by the provincial Act include:

"a) Adopting such measures as may be necessary to implement and enforce this Act.

b) Establishing coordination and participation mechanisms of municipal or community authorities that promote tourism development.

c) Issuing regulations concerning the tourism activities, products and services falling under the scope of this Act.

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[54] www.turismopalpala.com
[55] municipio.smandes.gov.ar

d) Preparing and submitting an annual budget to the Executive Power.

e) Coordinating – together with provincial, municipal or community authorities – policies related to the preservation of the architectural and cultural heritage and to the environmental aspect of tourism promotion, providing the necessary technical guidance and support when fostering tourism.

f) Conducting inspections and applying sanctions in relation to tourism activities, as provided herein.

g) Declaring certain jurisdictions "Tourism Municipality or Community", as regulated herein.

h) Creating, ordering and managing the Provincial Registry of Tourism Service Providers.

i) Coordinating, fostering and incentivizing actions to promote the tourism image of Tucumán and its natural and cultural resources in the country and abroad, through national and international agreements and joint exchange, promotion and dissemination, in order to increase the amount of inbound tourism to the Province.

j) Providing assistance and supervising non-university tourism-related programs as well as formal education in said field, including technical, technological, university, postgraduate, and continuing education.

k) Preparing and implementing tourism training programs and, in general,

l) Exercising any other power granted hereunder."

It should be noted that the system somehow reproduces - at the provincial/municipal level- the characteristics of the national/provincial system.

Likewise, provinces may collaborate with one another and/or with the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires in order to generate specific unions, as explained by section 124 of our Constitution: "The provinces are empowered to set up regions for the economic and social development and to establish entities for the fulfillment of their purposes, and they are also empowered, with the knowledge of Congress, to enter into international agreements provided they are consistent with the national foreign policy and do not affect the powers delegated to the Federal Government or the public credit of the Nation. The City of Buenos Aires shall have the regime which is to be established to that effect..." In connection with regions and promotional continuity, the most successful example is probably the Official Regional Entity *Patagonia Turística*,[56] formed by the provinces of Santa Cruz; Chubut; Río Negro; Neuquén; Tierra del Fuego, Antártida e Islas del Atlántico Sur; and La Pampa. This entity was created in order to promote and coordinate public and private recreational tourism activities, on the basis of objectives and policies consistent with the harmonic economic and social development of the region.

As stated by section 125: "The provinces may enter into partial treaties for purposes of the administration of justice, of economic interests, and works of common benefit, with the knowledge of the Federal Congress; and may promote their industry, immigration, the construction of railways and navigable canals, the colonization of provincial-owned lands; the introduction and establishment of new industries, the imports of foreign capitals and the exploration of their rivers, by means of laws protecting these ends and with their own resources..." Probably the most representative example of a provincial promotion alliance is the recent

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[56] www.patagoniaturistica.org.ar

agreement signed by the provinces of Córdoba and Buenos Aires to combine and boost their tourism attractions: mountains and beaches. [57]

Although there exist doctrinaire differences regarding municipal autonomy, the associative phenomenon has become rooted at this level, and promotion alliances have been established, such as the Consortium of Tourism Municipalities of Buenos Aires. [58]

Private level – in general

Given that inbound tourism is a non-traditional export activity that attracts foreign currency, the private sector cannot and should not be excluded. The Act itself, following UNWTO guidelines, provides a list of two groups of activities:

I Activities directly linked to tourism (accommodation, travel agencies, transport, professional services, fairs, congresses, etc.) and II Activities indirectly linked to tourism (gastronomy, cafés, bars, restaurants, ballrooms, regional products, handicrafts, antiques, etc.)

Although the list may seem particularly long, or its categories arguable, the enforcement authority may modify it, since it is authorized to do so under the Act.

Of course, these providers will usually establish relationships with the public sector through business Associations and Chambers. Among them, the most important is CAT (Cámara Argentina de Turismo – Argentine Tourism Chamber). Created in 1966, it leads the private sector and is a close collaborator of governmental authorities. The private sector also includes AAAVyT (Asociación Argentina de Agencias de Viajes y Turismo – Argentine

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[57] www.playasysierras.gov.ar
[58] www.cotab.com.ar

Association of Travel Agencies) at the national level, with more than 1,100 affiliated companies; AVIABUE (Agentes de Viajes de Buenos Aires – Travel Agents of Buenos Aires), which brings together travel agents operating in the City; FEHGRA (Federación Empresaria Hotelero Gastronómica de la República Argentina – Federation of Hotels and Gastronomy Enterprises of the Argentine Republic); AHRCC (Asociación de Hoteles, Restaurantes, Confiterías y Cafés - Association of Hotels, Restaurants, Snack Bars and Cafés), probably the oldest of its kind, founded in 1905; AHT (Asociación de Hoteles de Turismo – Association of Tourism Hotels), which brings together hotels of the highest standard; FEDECATUR (Federación de Cámaras de Turismo Regionales - Federation of Regional Tourism Chambers);   AOCA (Asociación de Organizadores de Congresos de la República Argentina – Association of Congress Organizers of the Argentine Republic); AFEET (Asociación Femenina de Ejecutivas de Empresas de Turismo – Association of Women Executives of Tourism Companies) and CTC (Cámara de Tiempo Compartido – Timeshare Chamber).

Conclusion

At the beginning we said that the tourism activity, just like any other economic activity, has impacts on the surrounding environment, both positive and negative.

For example:

A) Although tourism may become a vital strategic resource and many countries have succeeded in overcoming huge crises thanks to it, if it becomes a "monoculture" it could give rise to many risks: faced with a transport boycott or simply a reduction in popularity, the industry could come crumbling down.

B) Just like tourism may boost and strengthen the market of local handicrafts, folklore, etc., it may also be the case that excessive competition among suppliers may lead to mass production of what is intended to be hand-made, or generate off-the-shelf shows out of what was originally typical dancing, thus distorting local culture.

C) Also, it may be found that the capacity of a picturesque place that attracts a large number of tourists is exceeded, and what may have initially been a promising resource generator may turn into a tragic crisis, with inadequate infrastructure to provide health, security or like services.

Therefore, the role of the community is to maximize positive effects and minimize negative ones.

As always, the key lies in awareness-raising: if the community does not participate, any debate over laws, infrastructure or resources will be futile. Cross-cutting measures require cultural changes in our behavior, which undoubtlessly begin with change taking place in ourselves. Individualistic and paternalistic attitudes which initially seem to simplify situations end up having a paralyzing and freezing effect. Teamwork, instead, although it may seem more complex at the beginning, is dignifying and life-giving.

CHAPTER 4: COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN SEASIDE RESORTS

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Background

By mid-2004, a group of municipalities located along the Atlantic coastline of the province of Buenos Aires informed local authorities about the need to improve the environmental and tourism quality of the services offered at seaside resorts. This concern led the National Secretariat for Sustainable Development and Environment and the National Tourism Secretariat to join forces and analyze the issue. Following a cross-sector and interdisciplinary work, in August 2005 a document was published under the title "Quality Beaches and Seaside Resorts:

Tourism and Environmental Management.

Self-assessment Guidelines". It was the first local attempt to improve the services rendered at seaside resorts. However, it then became apparent that it was necessary to conduct new studies that eventually led to the establishment of a Technical Committee in charge of preparing an Argentine standard for

Quality, Safety and Environmental Management in Seaside Resorts. The work of this Technical Committee resulted in the IRAM 42100 standard.

Requirements

IRAM 42100 is a requisite standard, certifiable by an independent third party. It applies to organizations that render services at seaside resorts, whether or not under concession contracts, and regardless of their location, complexity, size, and the existence of recreational bathing.

The requirements of the standard are classified according to the Plan-Do-Check-Act model and include the following aspects: planning, processes, staff activities, infrastructure, environment and surroundings, general safety, tourists/customers, environmental information and education, and improvement actions.

The standard is structured in eight chapters:

0 Introduction

1 Purpose and scope

2 Consultation documents

3 Terms and definitions

4 Planning

5. Resource management

6 Service provision and operation

7 Measurement and follow-up

8 Improvement

The structure described above is adjusted to the model required by IRAM's Directive 1 regarding the preparation and submission of technical rules.

The first four chapters refer to the origin of the standard, to the organizations to which it applies, to the documents on which it was based and to the definitions of terms that are used throughout the document.

The chapters on auditable requirements begin on the item Planning and include Resource Management, Service Operation and Provision, Measurement and Follow-up, and Improvement.

Chapter FOUR (Planning) deals with document generation - Management Manual, Policy Manual and necessary procedures and instructions - and control of all documents related to the management system. This chapter also describes processes and their relationship, and defines quality, safety and environmental objectives. Finally, the chapter establishes customer, legal, regulatory and organizational requirements; responsibility and authority; risks and environmental aspects.

In brief, chapter four describes the fundamental aspects of the management system.

Chapter FIVE explains Resource Management, including human resources and infrastructure.

As regards human resources, the IRAM 42100 standard mentions two main items. First, staff training, taking into account the roles of each member of the organization. Second, awareness-raising on each person's responsibility to achieve the proposed objectives.

As established by principle three of quality management, all staff is essential to an organization and their full commitment makes it possible for their abilities to benefit the organization.

As regards infrastructure, the chapter explains building and landscaping works, and their relevant facilities and equipment, in order to render services. In this regard, the IRAM 42100 standard promotes accessibility to spaces and services for all, including disabled people.

To sum up, the implementation and maintenance of a Management System requires tangible and intangible resources such as human resources, infrastructure, facilities, information, economic resources.

CHAPTER SIX on SERVICE OPERATION AND PROVISION deals with the Planning and Control of the service provision processes defined in chapter four (Environment and Safety).

The section on Environment and surroundings includes the follow-up on water quality of recreational bathing waters; water resource management; land and air quality and cleanliness assurance; preservation of flora, fauna and landscapes; rational use of energy resources and visual pollution control.

As regards safety – one of the most important aspects of the standard -, the chapter deals with safety in the bathing area, nautical safety, user safety, food health and safety, staff safety and safety within facilities.

CHAPTERS 7 AND 8 discuss measurement and follow-up, in relation to processes, products and services. It also deals with service improvement, establishing corrective measures in case of actual non-conformities and departures from requirements; preventive measures in case of potential non-conformities and departures; and improvement measures for the management system, processes, products, services and staff skills and qualifications.

According to principle seven of quality management, measurement and follow-up may provide the organization with strategic information to improve its performance.

Also, continued improvement of overall performance should be a permanent objective of organizations providing services in seaside resorts.

Benefits:

The implementation of a comprehensive management system, according to the IRAM 42100 standard, brings internal and external benefits to organizations providing services in seaside resorts.

Internal benefits include:

- Increasing productivity and profitability thanks to the improvement of internal processes. The components of the organization are aware of what is expected from them and are guided to perform their tasks with greater economic results. The likelihood of avoiding departures is maximized: reprocessing, repetition of works, delays, customer complaints. Communication becomes more fluid, with responsibilities and objectives;

- Implementation of proper practices for sustainable resource use, following the requirements promoted by the standard;

- More effective, safe and environmentally-responsible service provision;

- Improvement of staff motivation and work, which is a decisive factor in the organization's collective effort to achieve proposed objectives;

- Continued improvement as a result of the identification of new opportunities to improve achieved objectives.

External benefits, that is to say, those derived from the relationships between the organization and interested parties (actual and potential customers, competitors, suppliers, etc) include:

- Progress in competitiveness. The organization begins to become differentiated from competitors, showing its concern for quality, for environmental protection and for the health and safety of both users and staff;

- Image improvement. The organization improves its image, showing that customer satisfaction is its main concern;

- Increased reliability among actual and potential customers, since the organization begins to show its capacity to provide, in a consistent manner, the agreed products and/or services;

- Greater satisfaction of users, staff, suppliers and the local community, among other interest groups;

- Opening of new markets through the incorporation of new customers that search for organizations with certified management systems; Contribution to improve and preserve tourism destinations, by meeting requirements that promote the rational use of natural resources, including flora, fauna, water, land, air.

Towards the certification of seaside resorts

Conforming to or meeting the requirements of the IRAM 42100 standard is voluntary: organizations at the seaside resort voluntarily decide whether or not to comply with them. Checking compliance with the IRAM 42100 standard is one of the aims of both internal and external auditing.

In order to obtain a certification under the IRAM 42100 standard, the organization must meet the specified requirements and give objective proof of said compliance.

One of the most successful experiences as regards the application of the standard is that of PARADOR & RESTO BAR NOCTILUCA, located in Villa Gesell.

At the opening of the 2007-08 summer season, NOCTILUCA obtained the certification of its quality, safety and environmental management system, after having met the requirements of the IRAM 42100 standard. It thus became the first seaside resort in the Argentine Atlantic Coast to apply said standard to its services.

"I took the decision of certifying the quality, safety and environmental management system of NOCTILUCA in order to genuinely differentiate ourselves from other service providers in the seaside resort and thus attract customers with higher expectations in relation to the environment, quality, infrastructure and equipment.   The task did not involve many inconveniences, since building works in the seaside resort had taken into account the provisions of ordinance 2050/06, which is aligned with the requirements of the IRAM 42100 standard. The most problematic item was Human Resources", said Marcelo Santurión, owner of NOCTILUCA. *"In our daily work we noticed great changes in the internal organization of the seaside resort, which translated into an optimization of supplies, mainly in relation to use and procurement, and of human resources, by generating greater participation and an interesting sense of belonging"*, he added.

CHAPTER 5: LABOR SKILL STANDARDS

Architect Daniel Beltrami

Architect. Master in International Marketing. Leader of the Argentine Delegation at the ISO TC 228 - Tourism and related services. Argentine representative at the AMN Committee on Tourism. Person responsible for the development of the first Argentine tourism standard and other 30 standards, including the IRAM-SECTUR.

Personal skills. Labor skills

...*"Do not expect the rigor of your path, that stubbornly diverges again and again, to end..."*

Jorge Luis Borges, "*Laberinto*" *[Labyrinth] from Elogio de la sombra [Praise of the shadow] (1969).*

This excerpt from Borges' *Labyrinth* is probably the best illustration of our reality, human reality, immersed in the mediate and immediate environment, where the endless mutation of reality, its factors and variables, obliges us to take decisions on a permanent and inexorable basis.

We are obliged to choose between A and B (or C and...) while assuming the risk, many times on the verge of uncertainty, as is the case when, at the time of taking a decision, we have little or no information: training, knowledge, experience, similar background, skills, abilities. On other occasions, we are more confident when we take a decision, when the risk is smaller, and we feel a lot more assured that, in all likelihood, our decision will lead us to success, since we will choose the correct option, A or B and in many cases C, D, etc.

Participating in the human adventure

Very far back in time, there existed a Mitochondrial Eve or Scientific Eve (Lucy, Australopithecus afarensis, 3.2 million years), a hominid fossil found in Ethiopia (Africa) in 1974. [59] If we trace the path of human evolution from that point up to now, we will observe a great display of successes and failures, parapraxes, deadlocks, incredible feats.

Some 70,000 years ago, migrants departed from Africa to the world, they were humans that were genetically connected to "Lucy" but very similar to us, and they embarked on the adventure of travelling around the world. Driven by curiosity or by the need for food, water, space, a higher standard of living, they emigrated in order to travel, to discover, to conquer... To explore, to understand, to confront, to dominate and be dominated, to adapt themselves, to survive, to create, to challenge, to progress, to decide, to fail and start all over again.

We have a lot in common with those humans who, starting from those magical and challenging moments (and even before that), had to face the never-ending *time to take decisions*, a capricious, obsessing and inexorable time.

The need to understand, comprehend, learn, remember, transmit information to generate knowledge in ourselves and others, in order to solve, create and always take decisions goes *in crescendo* from early childhood and never abandons us, except in cases beyond our possibilities, until we stop "being".

Starting from the observation of natural phenomena, successive animal migrations, the repetitive occurrence of certain phenomena at certain times,

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[59]   http://www.archaeologyinfo.com/australopithecusafarensis.htm

periods of rain and droughts, the movement of stars, dawns and dusks, our ancestors felt obliged to remember and share information in order to draw conclusions, to infer logic, to invent adaptation and exploitation mechanisms and later to challenge the dominance of nature and attempt to beat it.

From oral transmission to the most sophisticated communication technology, the storing, processing and provision of information to generate knowledge have never stopped, just as we continue to be involved in unexpected situations and, once again, *our path stubbornly diverges and we must choose between A or B...and it stubbornly diverges again...*.

Decisions

A decision involves making a judgment or choice between two or more alternatives, on many and diverse occasions throughout our lives. It implies transforming the input "information" into the output "decision", "option". *Defining the problem constitutes fifty percent of the solution.* [60]

Generally speaking, taking a decision implies:

- *Defining the purpose,* what exactly has to be decided.

- *Considering available options,* possible alternatives.

- *Evaluating options:* which are their pros and cons.

- *Choosing among available options,* and deciding which is the best.

- *Putting the selected option into practice.*

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[60] http://psicologia.laguia2000.com/general/la-toma-de-decision

The arduous task of climbing the pyramid

From the Mitochondrial Eve onwards, the human adventure has not only continued nonstop, but has also become invigorated and more complex, climbing again and again Maslow's pyramid, falling to already overcome stages and stubbornly climbing again.

Maslow, who established a hierarchy of human needs in his theory on motivation, holds that, once basic needs are met, humans develop new and increasingly sophisticated needs and wishes, until we reach abstraction for creating.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is generally described as a five-level pyramid: The first four levels may be grouped as *deficit needs*; the highest level comprises *being needs*.

The theory thus holds that the lowest level corresponds to physiological needs: hunger, thirst, regulating homeostasis (absence of illnesses), sexual needs.
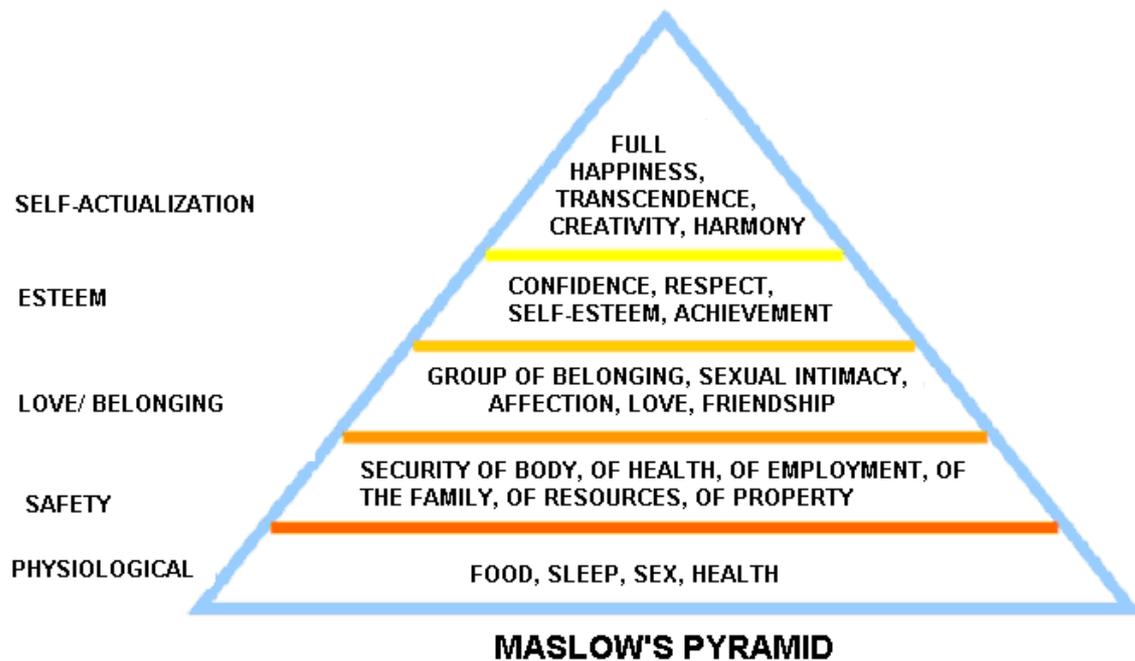
The second level, once human beings have satisfied their physiological needs, encompasses the security of body, employment, resources, the family, health, and property.

The third level is reached once the individual feels physically safe, and is related to emotional development, that is to say, affiliation, association, participation and acceptance: friendship, affection and love. These needs are met through services, including sport, cultural and recreational activities.

The fourth level, the recognition level, refers to the manner in which personal work is recognized, and is related to self-esteem, belonging, the need to achieve prestige, success, recognition.

Finally, there is the need for self-actualization, the most elevated need. It is at the top of the hierarchy: people, through their personal satisfaction, find the

sense of life by developing their potential in a certain activity, they reach self-actualization and feel the need to give everything about themselves, to create.

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                              FULL
                              HAPPINESS,
SELF-ACTUALIZATION            TRANSCENDENCE,
                              CREATIVITY, HARMONY
                        ─────────────────────────
ESTEEM                        CONFIDENCE, RESPECT,
                              SELF-ESTEEM, ACHIEVEMENT
                     ───────────────────────────────────
LOVE/ BELONGING           GROUP OF BELONGING, SEXUAL INTIMACY,
                          AFFECTION, LOVE, FRIENDSHIP
                 ────────────────────────────────────────────────
SAFETY               SECURITY OF BODY, OF HEALTH, OF EMPLOYMENT, OF
                     THE FAMILY, OF RESOURCES, OF PROPERTY
             ──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────
PHYSIOLOGICAL            FOOD, SLEEP, SEX, HEALTH

                    MASLOW'S PYRAMID
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The extraordinary capacity to adapt

The success of all species, plant, animal and other unclassified categories, has to do with the ability to survive, to mutate, to learn, to progress, to adapt.

How do individuals face up to the vicissitudes of daily life? How do they achieve and heighten, and even transmit to others, the rules of personal autonomy?

An individual uses his/her capacity, behavior, ability and expertise to adapt and progress, facing up to the demands, obstacles and shortcuts of the natural and/or artificial environment, of his/her reference groups, of his/her own aspirations and limitations: age-related, social, physical, natural, cultural, economic, intrinsic, etc.

Causes and effects

In the field of organizations, different sciences have made contributions so that the capacity to adapt, the need for human self-actualization, the conscious observation of abilities and skills may help to achieve success. Anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, administrators, technicians, different observers have put forward theories and practices to direct efforts, minimize distraction and maximize benefits when using resources.

In relation to specialists' proposals for modern business management, I would like to consider Ishikawa and Levy.

Kaoru Ishikawa, born in Japan, is widely known in his country and abroad for his contributions to management and to his country's development after WWII.

His most outstanding contributions include: 1) the development of the Total Quality Management concept, 2) the defense of quality circles, and 3) the seven basic tools of quality. The Cause-and-Effect Diagram, also known as the Fishbone Diagram or Ishikawa Diagram, identifies the causes

of an effect or problem and classifies them. Essentially, it comprises five factors:

1. People:

2. Machines (equipment, tools),

3. Methods,

4. Materials (tangible, intangible),

5. Environment.

Other factors may be added: measurement, management, time. Out of the five fundamental factors, it would seem that people are just one more factor

among the rest. However, the influence of people on the other factors is essential for this small and powerful management tool to work. [61]

PEOPLE   METHODS   MATERIALS

DESIRED EFFECT

MACHINES   ENVIRONMENT

CAUSES

ISHIKAWA, CAUSE-AND-EFFECT OR FISHBONE DIAGRAM
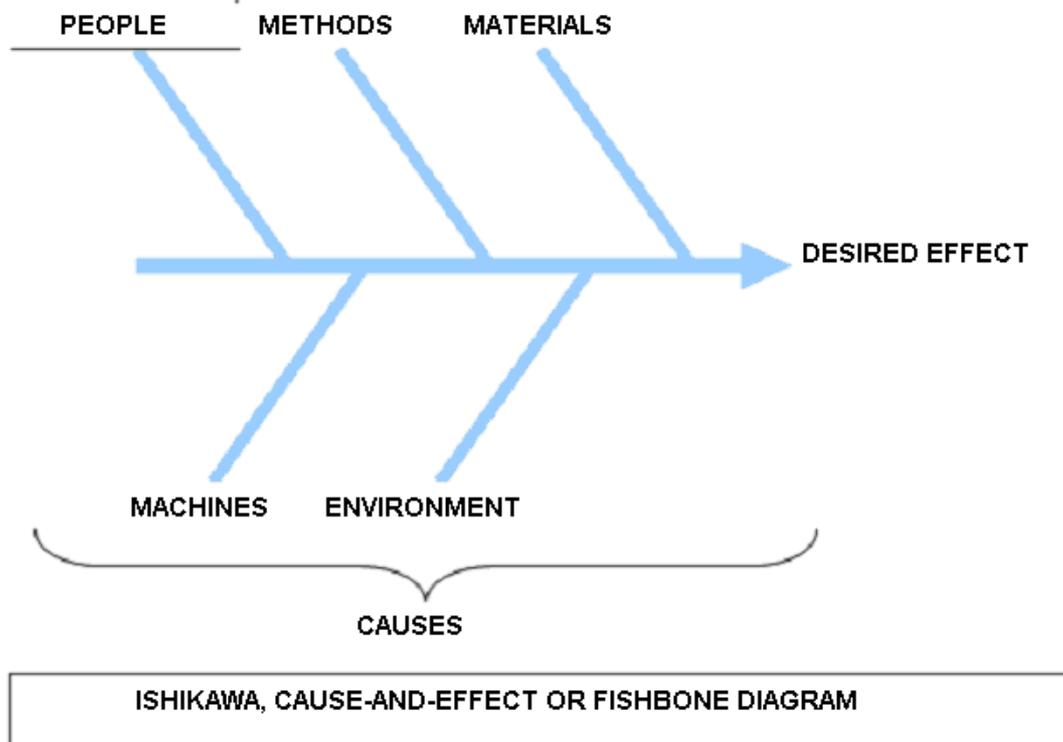
Alberto Levy, born in Argentina, a well-known marketing and business management specialist, on talking about the achievement of business competitiveness, remarks that:

"*The selection, training and promotion of persons should be based on the strategic competitiveness requirements and not on available candidates, their past experiences or their acquaintance with the business or activity.*"

The selection of causes will lead us to the expected outcome, or at least as close as possible to success, where personal skills and labor skills become more significant than the remaining factors. We can have the best hotel as regards equipment and infrastructure, but if we do not have someone to make the best

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[61] http://www.gestiopolis.com/recursos4/docs/ger/diagraca.htm

of its virtues, we will find it difficult to achieve success in a highly competitive market.

Levy also discusses the flexibility of companies to adapt to changing markets and, even better, to implement new (and unprecedented) ways to adjust to markets with new and unprecedented demands. *"To speak about flexibility, I squeeze a tennis ball with all my strength, but because the ball has a property that engineers call resilience, when I let go and the ball recovers its original shape, IT IS JUST THE SAME AS IT WAS BEFORE. In times of drastic change, this feature is of no use for a company. Companies cannot not be like they were before because then they will be no more. Plasticity in the face of change means that when I squeeze the ball, instead of going back to its original form, it adopts a better shape to fulfill its aims".* [62] However, this proposal, despite being excellent from the strategic and conceptual viewpoint, needs highly qualified persons to operate the organization.

Personal Skills and standards

According to the definition of CINTERFOR -Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training- of ILO –International Labor Organization-, labor skills standards (NCL) are an instrument which defines labor skills in terms of: knowledge, abilities and attitudes applied to the performance of a productive function, according to quality requirements of the productive sector.

A Labor Skill Standard reflects:

- Abilities and knowledge required to work efficiently;

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[62] Levy, Alberto. *Mayonesa, estrategia y alineamiento competitivo*. Available at: http://www.albertolevyblog.com/

- Competence to work in a framework of health and security;

- Ability to respond to technological changes and working methods;

- Ability to transfer skills from one working situation to another one.

A Labor Skill Standard describes:

- what a person must be able to do;

- the way to judge whether the work was well done;

- the conditions in which the person must show his/her skill;

- the ability to perform duties in an organizational environment and to relate with others;

- the ability to face contingent situations.

As Labor Skills express the *knowledge,* the *knowledge to do*, and the *knowledge to be* of an individual, meaning the combination of knowledge, abilities (intellectual and social ones) and capabilities in the performance of a productive function, these skills cannot emerge from the traditional occupational analysis (which entails the identification and enunciation of tasks according to the job), but it is necessary to apply a method intended to highlight the relation between the functions and activities that make up a productive function.

SKILLS Concept

"professional capabilities and specialized technical knowledge applied in a specific context" (Resolution 150 / 1975 ILO)

"Proven ability to apply knowledge and capabilities" (NTC-IS0 9000:2000) 3.9.12

"Proven capabilities and personal attributes to apply knowledge and abilities"
(NTC-ISO 19011:2002) 3.14

SKILLS Characteristics

- Adapted to the present and future reality

- Noticeable and measurable

- Easily identifiable

SKILLS Classification

1. Generic

They include the common elements of any profession:

- Ability to learn

- Ability to make decisions

- Project design

- Administrative abilities

- Oral and written communication

- Ability to analyze and synthesize

- Information technology knowledge with relation to the area of study

- To propose alternative solutions to problems.

2. Personal

Leadership

- Team work

- Interdisciplinary team work

- Interpersonal abilities

- Recognition of diversity and multiculturalism

- Critical reasoning

- Ethical commitment

Certification according to labor skill standards

The IRAM -Argentine Institute of Standardization and Certification- defines that the Certification of Persons, as well as the certification of management systems, means the documented recognition provided by an independent, objective and prestigious third party, of the fulfillment of a set of requirements and criteria by a person. The OAA (Argentine Accreditation Body) has accredited IRAM as a Persons Certification Body according to IRAM-ISO/IEC 17024 standard, becoming the first Persons Certification Body in Argentina.

The effectiveness in the performance of a specific activity depends on the knowledge and capabilities of the persons performing that activity or responsible for it. The tasks related to those activities require suitable theoretical and practical knowledge about the work that they plan, execute, supervise, monitor, assess and improve. The certification is based on the demonstration by the auditee, of objective evidences of the fulfillment of the requirements documented in the audit criteria.

Example: Certification of Non Destructive Testing (NDT) Staff

Even though the activity related to the certification of persons is part of IRAM-ISO/IEC 17024 standard, that activity must be complemented by another specific standard or internal document of the Certification Body. In the case of NDT staff certification, it is complemented by the IRAM-ISO 9712 standard.[63]

The ISO 17024 Conformity Assessment – General requirements for bodies operating the certification of persons- sets out the requirements to help certification bodies to operate in a consistent and reliable way. This standard does not deal with the quality management system applied by the respective body. In other words, it does not replace the eventual ISO 9000 certification.

The standard is directed to help certifying bodies to generate confidence in the parties interested in the certification through their independence and impartiality with relation to certified persons and candidates and requires the adoption of the necessary measures to ensure their ethical operation.[64]

IRAM AND IRAM SECTUR LABOR SKILLS STANDARDS

- IRAM 42700: Specialized tourism guide

- IRAM 42720: Tourism reporter

- IRAM SECTUR 42701: Specialist in rafting

- IRAM SECTUR 42702: Specialist in canoeing

- IRAM SECTUR 42703: Specialist in horse riding

- IRAM SECTUR 42704: Specialist in bicycle touring

- IRAM SECTUR 42705: Student Tourism Coordinator

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[63] IRAM Certification of labor skills.
[64] CINTEFOR Centro Interamericano para el Desarrollo del Conocimiento en la Formación Profesional. (Inter-American Center for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training), ILO

All these standards consider that "*skills include the knowledge, attitudes (knowledge to be) and abilities (knowledge to do) of an individual".* They intend to satisfy customers' needs through the fulfillment of the requirements agreed with them, complying with the laws and regulations.   They enhance the satisfaction of customers and other stakeholders (e.g.: Government, community, customers, etc.) through the efficient fulfillment of their competence requirements; and rely on a reference framework for the optimization of the services provided".[65]

From our remote antecedents until today

The enhancement of human abilities and skills has evolved from intuitive, rudimentary and basic levels up to the rational and scientific improvement to achieve what we can call human archetypes, which may be: athletes, scientists, designers. Super humans who challenge limits, arguments, paradigms and science, placing themselves on the verge of science fiction. We -common persons who need to improve our skills for the personal gratification of a well done job- are not so far from them.

Man does not rest; he wants more. He forces his way to make it diverge into another one in order to have the opportunity to make new and risky decisions, diverging his way once more... He stubbornly climbs Maslow's pyramid, and does not stop in case of failure. He recommends to climb once and again, learning from experience and designing new and different practices.

Observation, registration, information exchange, knowledge improvement, team work, and successful projects require skillful, prepared and qualified persons.

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[65] IRAM 42720 standard on tourism reporter. Skill requirements.

And, as we already mentioned, personal skill standards are simple manifestations of the human search for quality in the provision of services, as well as the improvement of abilities and fulfillment of expectations and requirements, and efforts to do things well from the first time.

The objective evidence of the fulfillment of standards

ISO defines CERTIFICATION as THIRD PARTY attestation related to products, processes, systems or PERSONS, meaning by attestation the activity based on a decision made after review and consisting of the authorization and issuance of a statement expressing that SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS were fulfilled. This statement may be a certificate of conformity.

To conclude, the main purpose of the third party certification is to ensure that an organization, system, process or person has the ability to offer products and services which satisfy the applicable legal requirements of the customers and those requirements established by the organization, used as auditing criteria and as a verification of their efficient application and permanent improvement.

The accreditation and certification system involves several actors to ensure the reliability of the system and the credibility of results.

- THE ACCREDITATION BODY (e.g.: OAA (Argentine Accreditation Body) audits the Certification Body according to ISO IEC 17024 Standard and accredits it for the certification of persons.

- THE ACCREDITED CERTIFICATION BODY (e.g.: IRAM (Argentine Institute of Standardization and Certification) audits the Applicant according to the labor skills standard, for example, the IRAM 42720 standard -Tourism Reporter.

- The APPLICANT is audited and if he provides objective evidence as regards the fulfillment of the requirements of the applicable labor skills standard, he receives the certification.

IMPORTANT. The application of standards for personal and labor skills must be done within the framework of the dignity of work and respect for individuals and, as the IRAM ISO 9001 standard mentions in its section 6.2.2.d, *"the organization must ensure that its staff is aware of the importance of its activities and of the way in which these activities contribute to the achievement of quality objectives".*

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CHAPTER 6 DOUBLE ACRONYM IRAM-SECTUR STANDARDS BY SECTOR

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6.1 Overview

Introduction

We have already arrived at the 21st Century and these times are certainly more difficult for enterprises due to the process of fast changes and global competitiveness that the world is experiencing and with which the business sector has to coexist.

For the tourism sector, the word competitiveness dominates our daily vocabulary. "We have to be competitive", we constantly hear.

Being competitive is the sum of two aspects: to be competent and to know how to compete. Being competent is to have the necessary ability to efficiently respond to the needs of our customers. To compete is the ability to be better than others. And one of the variables that allow us to be competitive is quality.

In only four years our country, as regards tourism, began to echo the world trends regarding quality and this subject became a priority for the activity.

But, what does we mean by quality in tourism?

The concept is somewhat difficult to understand because there may be definitions from different points of view. This situation has caused several persons to speak about the subject, but in fact the practical usefulness of this working tool is not really understood. Quality is first of all, the obviousness of fulfilling what has been promised to the customer.

This first definition makes us think of those situations in which tourists have been defrauded by the failure to comply with the provision of services. We might think of some assertions, such as: "this is not the hotel that the travel agency recommended me". In a restaurant, the waiter –when taking the order- says "unfortunately, that dish that is in the menu has already been finished" or when we arrive at the hotel and notice that it has nothing to do with the one that appears in the web page.

Misleading publicity is another basic aspect that we must try to eradicate in the communication of the tourism offer. If we raise false expectations in customers they will not return. Misleading publicity means those assertions related to the provision of services, which are not fulfilled and which may be expressed in brochures, web pages, contracts, confirmation of reservations and menus, among others.   Tourism services must be slaves of their promises and responsible in case of non-fulfillment.

If we consider quality from a wide perspective, it is important to understand that the perception of the tourism service provision by customers as a whole, requires to contemplate the service experience from a comprehensive point of view. Thus, planning, communication and quality must be assembled to achieve a correct design and marketing of customer services.   Here, we start to speak about "service design", what implies "to think about the service before providing it": Does the service respond to the expectations of my customer? What does the tourist who visits our destination value? How can I adapt the service? How can I introduce changes and/or improvements? This is an

essential step to stop being "providers" and "spontaneous destinations" in order to become "professional entrepreneurs" and "competitive destinations".

Successful businesses are those that have put their eyes and mainly their ears on the customer, and have redesigned their services to make them more efficient and effective in order to fulfill their expectations.

This is the starting point to ensure a completely customer-oriented business management.

In this context, we can state that we encounter a thriving management culture that aims at replacing the reaction and the lack of measurement within organizations. This implies a more professional approach of the tourism business based on management, in the broadest sense of its interpretation.

As regards quality, management is also essential and it involves a direct and clear orientation to the customer including customer service and the suitability of facilities and equipment.

Tourism and standardization: Series of IRAM SECTUR standards

Standardization has reached tourism activities both at the national and international level in search of tools directed to unify common criteria, in order to get more homogeneous results in the provision of services and ensure the customer that the service is provided according to established requirements.

In 2007, IRAM – Argentine Institute of Standardization and Certification- together with SECTUR – National Tourism Secretariat- developed, for the first time, standards for the tourism sector. As a result of this task, which was

performed in two years, we have 23 standards with double acronym IRAM SECTUR, which are:

2008 edition Standards	2009 edition Standards
Accommodation	Accommodation
42200 Hotels 42210 Cabins 42220 Bed & Breakfast	42230 Hostel 42240 Camping 42250 Rural accommodation
Active tourism	Active tourism
42500 Hiking and trekking 42510 Mountaineering tourism services 42520 Horse riding tourism services 42530 Bicycle touring services 42540 Rafting tourism services 42550 Canoeing tourism services	42560 Tourism navigation in motor boats 42570.- 4WD tourism services.
Gastronomy	Labor skills
42800 Restaurants	42705 Student tourism coordinator 42701 Specialist in rafting 42702 Specialist in canoeing 42703 – Specialist in horse riding

	42704 Specialist in bicycle touring
Others -2009 Edition	
42300 Tourism services in natural protected areas 42400 Museum visitors services	
42900 Organization of events	

The last approval stage of the last IRAM SECTUR standard of this group –which is the future standard 42.910 Tourism services intermediation companies- has remained pending until March, 2010.

The purpose of this standardization process is the development of competitive structures in markets tending to the implementation of these actions. The application of any standard is voluntary, and it may always be a point of reference with respect to the company's improvement intention.

Criteria for the development of IRAM SECTUR standards

At the beginning of the standardization activity, the international standard of quality management systems ISO 9001 was taken as a general working framework, but it was considered essential to enrich documents with requirements that establish environmental and security aspects. Thus, ISO 14.001 standards on environmental management systems and IRAM 3800 standard on security management systems were also considered as points of reference.

It is worth mentioning that, as any standard, the requirements of these standards take for granted the fulfillment of the legal and statutory aspects of each organization. However, some of the standards -as the IRAM SECTUR

42.800 standard on Restaurants- have emphasized this condition in their text, for considering it necessary for their sector.

Management systems involved in each IRAM SECTUR standard

In broad lines, IRAM SECTUR guidelines develop a comprehensive management system (Quality, Environment and Security), with a few exceptions. The condition or scope of each of them is detailed below.

IRAM SECTUR standard	Applied management system
42200 Hotels	Quality, Security and Environment
42210 Cabins	Quality, Security and Environment
42220 Bed & Breakfast	Quality, Security and Environment
42230 Hostel	Quality, Security and Environment
42240 Camping	Quality, Security and Environment
42250 Rural accommodation	Quality, Security and Environment
42300 Tourism services in natural protected areas	Quality, Security and Environment
42400 Museum visitor services	Quality, Security and Environment
42500 Hiking and trekking	Quality, Security and Environment
42510 Mountaineering tourism services	Quality, Security and Environment
42520 Horse riding tourism services	Quality, Security and Environment

42530 Bicycle touring services	Quality, Security and Environment
42540 Rafting tourism services	Quality, Security and Environment
42550 Canoeing tourism services	Quality, Security and Environment
42560 Tourism navigation in motor boats	Quality and Security
42570.- 4WD tourism services vehicles.	Quality, Security and Environment
42800 Restaurants	Quality and Environment
42900 Organization of events	Quality

Characteristics of the standards

National

IRAM SECTUR standards have a national scope for their certification. They were developed with the broad participation of specific world-wide providers and associations, which ensured the adaptation of the contents to the different variants that may be encountered in our territory in order to include the differences of the activities.

Voluntary

The application of IRAM SECTUR standards is subject to the decision of each organization to implement them. The success of the concept of quality and its application is closely linked to the Top Management' conviction of the need for this tool.

Sector

Unlike standards such as ISO 9001, which are of a general nature (that is to say, they apply to any kind of organization), these standards are specific to the tourism sector, so they are more valuable for those applying them.

Pioneer

This experience was a pioneer action in Argentina and also in other countries due to its originality and the wide range of subjects. Our country –together with Brazil and Spain, for example- is one of the countries with more standardized activities.

References for the sector and its professionals

Even though we have a background of tourism vocabulary developed by different professionals of the activity, the standards are included in an unprecedented framework of specific technical homologation of the sector terms. This contribution validated with the presence and participation of direct actors of each activity is an essential point of reference for the communication among tourism peers. We must take into account that these definitions are exclusively applied to standards.

Professionalization Tool

To rely on a specific technical vocabulary and a management guide organized by sectors allows organizations and persons to deepen the professionalization of the activity and improve competitiveness in general.

Standard structure

For a better comprehension of the standards, we will develop the main concepts as regards their structure. It is important to take into account that as they are organized by sectors, each standard has a specific nature.

There are differences between standards for the various types of standardized accommodations   and those related to active tourism. We will stress the differences that we consider more relevant.

Scope.

It is very important to take into account the scope of each standard. The scope defines which organization is included according to the definition of its activities in order to apply the appropriate standard. Thus, it is essential to read the chapter on terms and definitions, which describes the activities of each sector that apply to the standards.

For example, if we want to determine if a specific cabin applies to the standard, we must look for its definition in the corresponding document, which, in this case, says: "cabins. Tourism accommodation with a minimum of three independent and isolated units or grouped with others until a maximum of two, with facilities for the elaboration and provision of food, having a common administration and including reception, cleaning and security services, as well as parking and common open space". Ref. IRAM SECTUR Standard 42.210 Cabins. Point 3.1.

Exclusions

The exclusion of a standard is the non application of one or more requirements as determined by the document, with its respective justification and documentation. This possibility of excluding requirements is observed in active tourism and natural protected areas standards. The other standards do not allow exclusions.

Quality management

IRAM SECTUR standards have –in a great degree- the scheme of ISO 9001 standard on Quality Management Systems. For example, it keeps the structure

of the requirements about documentation (register and document control) and strategic planning (Top Management Commitment, policy development, processes identification and system review).

We can mention the following features in comparison with ISO 9001 standard and the different IRAM SECTUR standards.

Design and development

The design and development process, which is a requirement in ISO 9001 standard is also present in some IRAM SECTUR standards (For example, Museums, active tourism standards, tourism navigation in motor boats) with the exception of those related to accommodation.

The purpose of the inclusion of the design and development process in these activities is closely related to the production of circuits and itineraries which require the planning of each instance in order to ensure the customer's satisfaction and other aspects, such as those related to security and heritage conservation, among others.

For example, we mention the IRAM SECTUR 42.400 standard on Museums. Chapter 6. Services Management, Subsection 6.11 Entry data (for the design of services)

"The Top Management must determine the entry elements related to service requirements. These entry elements must consider:

a) the applicable legal and statutory requirements;

b) the needs of the public and of the organization;

c) the characteristics of the heritage to be visited;

d) the capacity of the exhibition spaces, as defined by the Top Management;

e) the characteristics of the services involved;

f) the number of employees available for the activity;

g) the season of the year and the weather conditions of the place, where applicable;

h) the necessary security conditions;

i) the information on insurances and their conditions;

j) the information from similar previous designs, where applicable".

Linear processes

The structure of IRAM SECTUR standards on the different types of accommodation, museums, organization of events and tourism navigation in motor boats, identifies the main processes of each organization on which the standard is based and its requirements. The remaining standards establish that processes are identified by each organization.

In the structure of IRAM SECTUR Standard 42.560 on Tourism navigation in motor boats we can see an example of linear processes.

"6. Service provision

6.1 Main processes

6.1.1 Communication of services

6.1.2 Reservations

6.1.3 Embarkation

6.1.4 Passenger service during navigation

6.1.5 Disembarkation

6.2. Support processes

6.2.1 Maintenance

6.2.2 Cleaning

6.2.3 Acquisitions"

Additional processes

The structures of IRAM SECTUR standards on the different types of accommodation, museums and tourism navigation in motor boats, allow the incorporation of other non-specified processes into management systems.

Plans

The documented development of plans allowing the follow-up of objectives is established as a requirement in the standards on accommodation, museums, organization of events and tourism navigation in motor boats. This requirement is not found in ISO 9001 standard. The requirement establishes that: "the Management must identify and organize the necessary actions and resources to meet the established objectives. The actions and their results must be documented relating objectives and execution terms".

Organization (paragraph 4.1 Active tourism standards)

IRAM SECTUR standards on active tourism include basic aspects, and in many cases legal aspects, related to the establishment of the organizations that carry out these activities.

For example, IRAM SECTUR 42.530 standard on bicycle touring services establishes the following:

"4.1 Organization

The Organization must:

a) identify itself with a trade name;

b) establish an address for the reception of customer documents, telephone number, e-mail and web site to facilitate the processing of reservations, contracts, complaints and filing of documents corresponding to the activity;

c) appoint a technical manager with knowledge on the activity, who may be the head of the organization;

d) have a tax identification number granted by the relevant authority;

e) identify the applicable legal and statutory requirements related to the activity and programs, and provide evidence of their fulfillment;

f) establish, document and communicate a policy that includes commitment with environmental care, social responsibility, security, service quality, relationship with associated providers and with the staff, contingencies resolution and equipment protection;

g) prove the accreditation of 70 excursion days of the programs offered by the company during the last two years of activity;

h) prove the fulfillment of all the requirements of this standard".

Internal communication

Even though ISO 9001 standard sets out guidelines for the internal communication of organizations, some of the IRAM SECTUR standards (For example, Museums) go further and establish as a requirement in chapter 5 on Human Resources the following:

" – to communicate to all the members of the organization the service result and the satisfaction level of the customer;

  -   to establish ways to allow the staff to communicate comments and suggestions about the service and about the organization in general."

Preventive actions

The requirement related to the identification and treatment of preventive actions is not found as such in IRAM SECTUR standards. It is only referenced in some standards as a NOTE, suggesting its incorporation.

Complaint and suggestion systems

IRAM SECTUR standards on the different types of accommodation, museums, organization of events and tourism navigation in motor boats specifically establish as a requirement to have a system for the treatment of customer complaints and a system for the treatment of suggestions.

Communication to the customer

All IRAM SECTUR standards put emphasis on the subject of communication with the customer, before the trip and during the same.

Standards related to active tourism include in the document the subject of communication with the customer and security reporting, for example, on the limitations and/or restrictions of the activity (physical condition, age, health and others), and level of difficulty of the activity.

Environmental Management

As regards environmental management, IRAM SECTUR standards establish requirements for organizations to implement duly documented programs of good environmental practices in tune with the concept of continuous improvement Likewise, they stress the importance of the communication with the customer as regards the environmental subject.

As an example, we copy the IRAM SECTUR 42.200 standard on Hotels.

"7 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

4.1 General requirements:

The top management must:

- define, implement and document a program of good environmental practices;

- appoint a person responsible for the environmental management of the hotel, for its follow-up and monitoring, and for the communication of policies and objectives to the staff and guests.

- plan actions directed to the reduction of the environmental impact, in the following aspects:

1. energy;

2. water;

3. management of waste materials;

4. staff training and awareness;

5. guest information and awareness;

6. provider awareness.

-periodically review the level of fulfillment of those actions, establishing corrective measures for those actions that do not reach the adequate levels, and register the results.

- promote staff participation in the proposals directed to the reduction of environmental impact;

- establish the optional nature of the proposals on environmental practices, which may have an impact on guest services.

NOTE 1 The person responsible for the environmental management may be the Top Management itself.

NOTE 2 It is recommended to define, document and implement a program of social responsibility of the organization and towards the community".

IRAM SECTUR standards for active tourism mention in their appendixes the international LNT (Leave No Trace) program.

Security Management

The guidelines of this management refer to the security of the organization staff and of the customers, but each standard and particularly the group of standards related to accommodation and active tourism have a different approach due to their own nature.

It is very interesting to see that in active tourism standards, security is a cross-cutting subject in relation to all the document, while in the accommodation standards it is specifically mentioned in chapter 8.

In active tourism, there are critical aspects, such as risk management, insurance, communication of risks and security measures to the customer, specific training, and in some standards the documents establish a very valuable risk assessment.

This risk assessment, taken from international standards (For example, Rafting, Mountaineering and Hiking and trekking standards) or developed during the standardization task of our country (For example, Horse riding – Bicycle touring – 4WD tourism services) may be used to inform the customer, explain the offer conditions to the intermediaries, and guide the new tourism providers with respect to a critical subject, such as security.

Social Responsibility

Some of the IRAM SECTUR standards -more specifically, those related to accommodation- develop this aspect as a requirement, with the exception of hotel standards. This requirement establishes that:

"The Top Management must ensure the existence, execution and monitoring of programs consistent with an environmental commitment and a local community participation commitment, in order to improve the residents' quality of life.

Present and future of IRAM SECTUR standards

IRAM SECTUR standards are a valuable contribution to organizations, service providers and the public organizations involved.

They help the sector to have a better technical knowledge of each subject and they serve as a guide for the optimization of the internal management and customer services. They also provide the necessary tools to carry out tourism activities in harmony with the environment and local communities, providing sustainability to the next generations.

Now that the standardization stage is almost finished (at least in this first instance), the future faces the great challenge of their application. Undoubtedly, the spreading of their benefits will be essential for their incorporation to the private and public sector of tourism.

6.2 IRAM SECTUR Standards on Active Tourism

Introduction to Alternative, Active and Adventure Tourism.

When we speak about alternative, active and adventure tourism almost instantly we encounter a range of images and emotions, of experiences and livings.

When we analyze travelers trends we may verify that this is one form of tourism that is growing more at the national, regional and world levels.

Strengthened by collective imagination, we can see ideas-concepts, such as: outdoor activities, healthy life, harmony emerging from the contact with nature, protection of the natural and/or cultural heritage; tourists seem to be tempted by a new world, a new life style, promoting a different conception of tourism, with all the challenges and perspectives that it implies.

This form of tourism is the result of the experiences of tourists, usually called: "travelers", who wish to live and experience a multi-faceted world in natural environments, in contact with original cultures, with adventure activities, feeling as protagonists of the activity.

 It is a search for personalized and unique experiences, in contrast with conventional or traditional tourism.

In the same way as travelers look for a personalized form of tourism, with programs adapted to their preferences and interests; providers respond to this type of tourism with some companies created by enthusiasts from different professions. These companies have professionalized over time and are generally small or medium size family companies. This allows for a greater response capacity to all changes, updates and innovations required by customers, and achieving a high satisfaction degree. Besides, in this sector there are great possibilities for the development of local communities and the preservation of nature.

Some specialists have tried to define alternative tourism as a form of tourism that emphasizes contact and understanding among communities and tourists, as well as the environmental issue. They have also defined it as a form of

tourism that is consistent with the natural, social and community values and allows a positive relationship between local people and tourists, generating fewer impacts on the natural and social environment, strengthening the links with other sectors (agriculture, craftwork, services) of local economy and more profits at local level, and favoring, in this way, a sustainable tourism activity.

The specific nature of this form of tourism lies in the philosophy of life that characterizes recreation and leisure activities and the way of traveling and knowing the world and its people. Tourism is looking for a more cultural, natural, personal and authentic "alternative", that is, an "alternative tourism".

In the terminological definition that is present in the series of Integrated IRAM-SECTUR Standards, we can see the richness of content of the expression Active Tourism: they are "trips the main motivation of which is to carry out tourism and recreational activities in direct contact with nature and to enjoy cultural expressions in a way consistent with the attitude and commitment of knowing, respecting, enjoying and participating in the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the visited site".

The authentic alternative tourism is not another product in the traditional market or a ramification added to tourism industry. Rather, it is a new generation form of tourism governed by a series of conditions that exceed conventional tourism. This does not mean that alternative tourism denies the need for support, such as, accommodation, transportation, food and beverage establishments, highways and other additional services. On the contrary, it needs them, but it also requires planning to carry out its activities.

The promotion of alternative tourism without risks is essential. That is why IRAM-SECTUR Standards were created. They refer to the training of specialized guides and the requirement of minimum security measures to establish an operating company that offers this form of tourism activities.

In this work, we will use as conceptual synonyms the following terms: alternative tourism, active tourism, adventure tourism.

Classification

The variety and richness of this form of tourism is so wide as the capacity of people to generate activities that respond to its interests and aspirations. For this reason, it is not easy to develop an homogeneous classification.

However, we may adopt the following criteria:

Taking into account the emphasis on the "natural character": activities that take place in natural environments, in contact with nature, and/or for the preservation of the natural environment. It includes: adventure tourism, ecotourism and natural tourism; as well as activities involving more sports-related aspects.

Taking into account the emphasis on the "social and cultural nature": A form of tourism that involves contact and learning of one or more cultures. It includes archeological, rural, religious and ethnic tourism, as well as popular and religious festivals, events and cultural expressions.

Another criterion may be the development areas: land, water, air. It includes the following activities. As regards land activities: all-terrain (4X4, 6X6, motorcycles), bicycle touring, horse riding, mountaineering, trekking, hiking, kite buggy, etc. As regards water activities: rafting, canoeing, kayak, floting, etc. As regard air activities: paragliding, hangliding, balloons, gliders, etc.

All these activities share the same spirit and philosophy of life; and they differ in the elements and resources employed in each of them, as it is shown in the development of each standard.

An important step in the growth of Active tourism in Argentina is represented by the works jointly carried out by IRAM and SECTUR in the development of comprehensive management standards for some activities, such as: horse riding; bicycle touring, mountaineering, trekking, hiking, rafting, canoeing, all-terrain; and labor skill standards for specialists in these activities.

This form of tourism requires a greater physical and emotional exhaustion, for example, rafting is an experience with a high emotional level. The ability and knowledge of group drivers are essential for the security of all the participants. Behind them, there is a lot of training and acquired knowledge as regards floodings, currents, risk areas, rescue and information systems about the flora and fauna that is encountered all along the course of the river.

Argentine Reality about Active Tourism: what we have, what we lack

Alternative, active or adventure tourism has experienced an important growth in our country in the last ten years, both as regards tourists -who require a different way of traveling- and tourism services offered by a vast diversity of providers.

Thus, the adventure tourism world welcomes the effort made in the agreement between SECTUR and IRAM, which reflects the great importance of an innovative form of tourism, that is increasingly growing in all the world and in our country.

According to the preliminary Report of the National Perspectives of Adventure Tourism submitted at the 2009 International Tourism Fair (FIT by its Spanish acronym) and jointly developed by the Tourism Secretariat of the Nation and AAETAV (Argentine Association of Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism) we can mention the following textual data:

In 2008, the country received 4,665,360 visitors, 80% of which performed activities in National and Provincial Parks. The main visited destinations of our country are: Ushuaia, Calafate, Bariloche, Iguazu, Puerto Madryn and Salta.

Most tourists that purchase adventure trips are not so much attracted by the practice of extreme sports, but for the "experiences" generated by the feeling of living an adventure.

Market Trends

- The segment of adventure trips is growing 30% each year in a sustainable way (UNWTO).

- Amounting to 20% in 2008, South America is the continent with more interest in adventure trips in the last 3 years. It surpasses classic destinations such as Australia and Africa (ATTA - Adventure Travel Trade Association).

- The main destinations visited by foreigners, with the exception of Buenos Aires, are sold as adventure trips. Ushuaia, Calafate, Bariloche, Iguazu, Puerto Madryn and Salta.

- 25% of the most important companies of the world that sell adventure trips have Argentine destinations among its most outstanding offers (ATTA).

Generation of Employment and Income

- As they sell experiences, these companies may attain a high added value to their offers.

- They generate a high employment rate with relation to the number of tourists they serve. - They offer employment opportunities for local people, which in several cases become real alternatives taking into account the constant changes of traditional productive economies.

- They make possible to extend tourist stay in destinations, including top ones.

Conservation Tool

- More than 80% of adventure offers are made in protected areas.

- The Argentine model of fishing return is taken as an example of conservation tools in parks throughout the world.

- The companies themselves become guardians of the environment.

- Tours generate environmental awareness in tourists.

- There is an interaction that increases the value of local cultures.

- It is one of the most powerful tools to relive and preserve artistic and cultural expressions, such as typical and regional festivals, gastronomy, music, handicrafts, etc.

Components of the adventure offer

- Specialized travel agencies

- Providers

- Specialized guides

- Ranches, cabins and hotels

- Sports clubs and schools.

Main observed data

- The census revealed up to the moment (Nov. 2009): 1,413 companies and providers in the country.

- More than 7,000 specialized professionals are directly employed.

- 39% of the companies are beginning to organize themselves.

- More than 70% of the companies emerged after year 2000 and more than 40% were set up in the last 5 years.

- The sum of the activities offered amounts to 2,216.

- Argentina has more than 1,800 specialized companies with an offer of more than 5,000 different products.

Main activities offered

1°.- Trekking

2º.- Horse riding.

3°.- All-terrain vehicles

4°.- Fishing

5º.- Bicycle touring.

6°.- Kayak/canoeing

7º.- Mountaineering.

8°.- Navigation

9°.- Rafting

10°.- Diving

11°.- Air Activities

12°.- Snow Activities

13°.- Sports Activities

14°.- Aquatic Activities

15°.- Canopy/Rappel

Operative state of companies

- Initial stage: 38% (they are beginning to operate and carry out sporadic activities; they operate informally or with pending authorizations.

- Operative: 49% (even being a small company it operates within a legal framework and with acceptable levels of service quality).

- Consolidated: 13% (it is recognized as a reference point in the activities it offers; it complies with all the legal requirements and has high levels of service quality).

Number of activities by company

1 activity: 70%; 2 activities: 17%; multiple activities: 14%.

Problems and challenges for the development of adventure tourism

- To update legislation related to the development of Adventure Tourism activities.

- To establish tools to certify specific technical knowledge about the activities.

- To implement a unified provincial registry

- To standardize minimum quality levels.

Source: National Perspectives of Adventure Tourism 2009; preliminary report. AAAETAV.

Quality standards applied to active tourism

Salta province is undertaking a project for the implementation of those standards for the active tourism sector with the participation of 15 providers and operators. Currently, there is one active tourism company certified by IRAM SECTUR Standards

Conclusion

The important growth of companies and providers of active tourism is relatively new; it began in year 2000 and is still growing. The high level of operators and providers who are beginning (39%) is an important fact because it represents an informal offer that lacks the minimum requirements and may be hired by national or foreign tourists. This fact contrasts with operative and consolidated companies and providers, which represent 62% of the offer.

The constant growth of this activity in foreign markets makes necessary to increase the professionalism level of companies and providers to ensure the provision of services according to recognized and validated standards. Today, with only one certified mountaineering company, we may assert that there is no implementation of quality, security and environmental standards that support the activity and allow high competitiveness and safe tourism. It is expected that by the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, 24 companies will have implemented these standards in Salta, Mendoza and Iguazu.

The purpose of these series of standards and their contribution to Active Tourism.

The growth of Active Tourism has shown the need to set out guidelines for the different activities, which have not been consistently regulated until now at regional and national levels. Thus, we believe that this is a landmark in the history of active tourism in Argentina, which provides the necessary tools to optimize the professionalization of the adventure tourism sector faced with a high demand of tourists.

Another aspect that is worth mentioning is that this pioneering standardization task of Active Tourism in Argentina will help to adjust the terminology of this sector to a comprehensive management system, achieving the adequate quality, security and environmental levels.

The participation of providers and operators of several regions of the country in its development guarantees a global vision of the diversity and richness of all the country's realities.

The optimization of the management system will result in several benefits: the organizations will be able to identify the best opportunities, obtaining important benefits for them, for the customers and for tourism destinations. The

development of the different processes will help organizations to be profitable and sustainable.

Other benefits of these standards for Active Tourism are the following: they promote corporate competitiveness both at local and international markets, allowing users to choose the best proposals according to their needs, aspirations and personal motivations and, at the same time, they contribute to their protection because standardization ensures the provision of safe and quality services.

Besides, they have a strong training nature, showing a way to develop organizations' management, as well as quality tourism products and environmentally-friendly policies.

This awareness, training, implementation and certification process, apart from improving the management system, may "increase the quality levels of service provision, ensure environmental protection, and improve the image of the company and customer loyalty. Besides, it generates economic benefits because the optimization of management processes results in the saving of resources".

Standards for active tourism and definitions for each activity

Activities

- IRAM-SECTUR 42500 – Hiking and trekking tourism services

- IRAM-SECTUR 42510 – Mountaineering tourism services

- IRAM-SECTUR 42520 – Horse riding tourism services

- IRAM-SECTUR 42530 – Bicycle touring services

- IRAM-SECTUR 42540 – Rafting tourism services

- IRAM-SECTUR 42550 – Canoeing tourism services

- IRAM-SECTUR 42570 – 4WD tourism services

- IRAM-SECTUR 42300 – Tourism services in natural protected areas:

(Note: this standard should be nearer to active tourism instead of conventional tourism)

Specialists

- IRAM-SECTUR 42701 – Specialist in rafting

- IRAM-SECTUR 42702 – Specialist in canoeing

- IRAM-SECTUR 42703 – Specialist in horse riding

- IRAM-SECTUR 42704 – Specialist in bicycle touring

Definition of the activities

1.- Hiking. Low difficulty activity which consists of walking in natural environments with diverse geographic conditions, often on hiking trails, but not requiring mountaineering equipment and techniques.

2.- Trekking. Activity consisting of walking in unmarked natural environments. It requires certain autonomy (orientation techniques, equipment, among others).

3.- Mountaineering. A form of active tourism consisting of walking in lands whose difficulty is equal or higher than the Fairly Difficult (AD) grade according to UIAA scale (see appendix D) for sports and/or recreational purposes.

4.- Horse riding. A form of tourism which uses horses and allows the access to natural environments by means of identified paths or roads.

5.- Bicycle touring. A form of adventure tourism consisting of a tour through an urban area, rural area or natural environment using bicycles.

6.- Rafting. Action of navigating down mountain rivers, rapids or other navigable rivers, either individually or in groups, in an appropriate and duly authorized boat, using paddles as the only means to propel and control the boat.

7.- Canoeing. Tourism activity consisting of navigating natural or artificial bodies of water, using kayaks or canoes, and paddles as the only means to propel and control the watercraft.

8.- 4WD tourism services. A form of active tourism in 4WD vehicles, organized beforehand and taking place on conventional roads, unconventional roads, vehicle tracks or special circuits. Circuits tours are guided by the organization with its own vehicles or those of the customers.

9.- Natural protected area (NPA) Zone of existing land surface, subsoil and/or bodies of water which, due to general interest reasons, especially of scientific, economic, aesthetical or educational character, must be set aside from human free intervention in order to secure the perpetual existence of one or more natural and/or cultural elements. The purpose of said area is the protection and preservation of biological diversity, natural resources and associated cultural resources, and must be surveyed by legal or other efficient means.

Cross-cutting subjects for all standards

The same key issues and the specific subjects of each activity were taken into account to write the standards. This fact gives cohesion and coherence to the cross-cutting reading of the standards. However, it would be convenient to make a series of adjustments among said standards, a challenge suggested for the next review thereof.

This series of IRAM-SECTUR standards for active tourism has many formative aspects tending to generate a new professional culture that offers operators and providers the necessary tools for enterprise development as regards quality, security and environmental protection.

These cross-cutting subjects are:

1.- Introduction: it is the same for all the series.

2.- Purpose and scope: it presents the activity to be treated in the standard, preparing us for the specific aspects of said standard.

3.- Prescriptive consultation documents: they indicate the standards that will help us to go deeper in certain issues and that will be used as a guiding framework of this series, for example: quality, security and environmental standards.

4.- Terms and definitions: it develops a basic glossary including concepts which will be used for all standards of this series, and for specific activities, as well as concepts already incorporated at global level.

5.- Planning: it offers fundamental corporate organizational clues.

6.- Resource management: it is one of the central subjects, if not fundamental, because around 90% of this form of tourism depends on the company's human resources, for example as regards: education, skills, training and, recently, equipment issues. All these subjects are enriched by the addition of their relevant appendixes.

7.- Service provision and operation: it is about program design, data survey, program verification and validation.

8.- Environmental management: It integrates environmental considerations with teaching purposes, suggesting the principles of the International Project Leave No Trace.

9.- Security Management: it is another sensitive level of this kind of activity, due to the great exposure to risks and dangers associated with active tourism. It refers to insurance, contracts, specific logistics, etc.

10.- Measurement and Improvement: it provides the bases for handling claims, customer satisfaction and improvement management.

11.- Appendixes: diverse documents for providers' orientation, training and information are added.

The necessary adjustments for each activity may be found in each of these cross-cutting subjects as regards specificity, requirements, needs and skills related to each activity, thus generating a unified vision of Active Tourism and dealing with the different activities.

Critical aspects and challenges of Active Tourism

This series of IRAM-SECTUR Standards not only promotes a new mentality and culture in favor of Active Tourism, paving the way for Quality, Security and Environmental management, but also produces a boosting effect in other critical aspects, such as: improvement of professionalism, promotion of associativism, fostering of continuing education and systematic studies; support for the regionalization of activities due to service standardization, and for scale commercialization due to optimized marketing.

On the other hand, it poses a series of challenges which are to be assumed and settled using comprehensive governmental policies. The public sector, which is distant or indifferent regarding private activities, may cause serious damage to the activity and tourism destinations. However, a committed Government working together with Private Providers and Operators may develop optimum policies about four central issues, such as: security of tourism services and destinations; preservation of the environment and socio-cultural heritage; strengthening of the sustainable management of tourism products; and all of these associated with a sufficiently clear and flexible legal framework allowing the adjustment to active or adventure tourism dynamics.

Assuming the critical issues, crisscrossing them with the standardization process and projecting this rich form of tourism -Alternative, Active or Adventure Tourism-, the development of a National and Regional Specific Plan arises as a great challenge, taking into account the principles of the Federal Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism (PFETS, by its Spanish acronym).

It is a dynamic and efficient plan, with short, medium and long-term impact, which contains sensitization dynamics, professional training, specific equipment, standard implementation, quality certification, and a continuous improvement towards excellence in tourism.

Socio-environmental Recommendations

Everything promoting environmental preservation lies within the standard spirit, like a richness inherent in tourism products. The International Project Leave No Trace (LNT) is suggested as a guiding and formative factor.

LNT (Leave No Trace) international program

This international program has been designed to help natural areas' visitors to avoid or minimize the impact of their visit. It is a program which offers tools to people with the purpose of evaluating their actions and taking the decisions which cause less impact. Its mission is to promote a responsible outdoor recreation. It is a program that specifies behavioral ethics in natural areas instead of rules or directives.

Official page of the international program: http://www.int.org and in Spanish

http://www.nols.edu/espanol/cursos/ndr.shtml. The basis of the Leave No Trace program is formed by the following 7 principles which serve as a guideline at the moment of planning or making journeys or excursions to natural areas.

We transcribe a synthesis of said program.

Principle 1: Plan ahead and prepare your journey

Outdoor activities with a minimum impact depend more on attitudes and consciousness than on rules and regulations. Minimizing impacts begins with a careful planning before the journey, taking into account the effects of your presence in the place. If a journey is planned ahead, comfort and security will be guaranteed. You must take into account the following issues in your plans in order to avoid negative impacts on nature.

Principle 2: Travel and camp on durable surfaces

Trample is an important impact caused by recreation in natural areas.

The application of the second principle will minimize damages to soil and vegetation caused by your visit. When you travel through natural areas, all your activities must be done on durable surfaces in order to minimize impact.

Traveling and camping require the greatest use of judgment to select the most convenient site to camp and walk and minimize ecological impacts. Strategies to be applied will depend not only on the ecosystem you visit, but also on the use patterns of the area. On high-use areas, activities must be concentrated on established routes and sites avoiding the extension of impacted areas in the zone. In remote or pristine areas, the indicated strategy is to spread out the activities in order to avoid the creation of lasting impacts or areas of disturbance. However, it is important to avoid recently impacted areas and let the site recover instead of transforming it in new use areas. In every area, it is important to avoid fragile sites and to protect fresh water sources.

Principle 3: Dispose of Waste Properly

We must take into account that, like us, other campers may visit the zone. Our objective and responsibility is to give them the opportunity to find the environment as we have found it and to enjoy it as we did. The use of techniques for the proper disposal of waste during your visit will give comfort and health to you and to future visitors, and will produce less environmental impact.

Principle 4: Respect Wildlife

Recreation in nature may cause impact on wildlife and, in the long-term, on society. Take into account the following issues: help to protect wildlife; wildlife does not exist without its natural habitat; protect species in danger of extinction.

Principle 5: Minimize Campfire Impacts

Building fires without duly precautions represents a threat to natural areas.

They may start forest fires and cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. For said reason, in many natural areas campfires are forbidden or only permitted in certain places. LNT encourages its followers to restrict, as much as possible, the use of campfires. The use of camp stoves and adequate clothing are factors which will reduce the need to build campfires. Camp stoves have become essential equipment for minimum-impact camping, because they are portable, fast and leave no trace.

If you decide to build a campfire, take the necessary precautions and use a water container for security and to avoid fire propagation.

Principle 6: Be considerate of other visitors

A characteristic of natural areas is that they are visited by different groups of people with different purposes. One of the most important components of outdoor ethics is to maintain courtesy toward other visitors. It helps everyone enjoy their outdoor experience.

You must not forget that it is only a visit and therefore the objective is to preserve the site as you found it, minimizing environmental disturbance during the stay.

Principle 7: Leave What You Find

People visit the backcountry to enjoy its natural condition and experience an environment full of challenges and surprises. Let other persons experience this sense of solitude and discovery leaving everything as you find it. Leave plants, wildlife, rocks, archaeological artifacts and other natural objects as you find them.

Preserve the past. Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.

Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

Source: OPEPA Foundation www.opepa.org

Conclusion

All the efforts gathered in the preparation of these Sector Standards with Double Acronym represent the interests of all groups, either public or private, in the development and optimization of Alternative, Active or Adventure Tourism.

Now, Operators and Providers must go ahead in the optimization of their products; National and Provincial governments must accompany them with promotion and support policies; new enterprises must be created to facilitate the implementation of these standards towards a continuous improvement of active tourism services in the Country and the Region.

6.3 IRAM SECTUR Standard for Tourism Services in Natural Protected Areas

Introduction

This standard for Tourism Services in Natural Protected Areas constitutes a pioneer advance as regards standardization in Argentina, because it adjusts the

sector's terminology to a comprehensive management system: quality, safety and environment

Natural Protected Areas are optimum settings for the development of Active Tourism activities; and, in turn, this form of tourism is perfectly adapted to ecosystem preservation. They generate a positive synergy, offering visitors, travelers and tourists the possibility of sustainably enjoying experiences in contact with nature.

Furthermore, on analyzing Quality, Security and Environment Management Standards developed for Active Tourism and Labor Competence Standards for Specialists, this unity of criteria becomes evident.

On the other hand, there exist a diverse and profuse bibliography about environmental issues, opinions on the public use of protected natural areas and innumerable definitions of terms and issues related to natural and cultural resources. The participation of members of research bodies and working groups is also valuable in the preparation of this standard. Reaching a consensus on the terms and definitions and every aspect of this standard has been an arduous and enriching task.

The result of this work has been a standardizing document with strong formative, guiding and instructive emphasis for those persons who want to develop tourism products in natural protected areas, either private, public or mixed.

Overview, global vision and specific aspects

From the beginning, the chapter referred to Purpose and Scope places us in the dynamics of the standard spirit, when it says: "This standard specifies the requirements for tourism service management within a protected natural area in order to improve the connection with tourism providers, and with the purpose of ensuring environmental and service quality and people's security to tourists and visitors, guaranteeing the preservation objective for which it was created."

It emphasizes three objectives:

1.- to guarantee the fulfillment of sustainability and social responsibility criteria;

2.- to establish criteria to manage the efficient and organized use of resources;

3.- to demonstrate the approval of this standard through its certification or registration by an institution alien to the organization.

As regards its Application, it specifies: "All the requirements of this document are generic and shall be applied to all natural or legal persons who administer protected natural areas regardless of their type (private, public or mixed), classification, size or jurisdiction. The requirements of this standard are also applied to cultural protected areas."

Like all the other standards of active tourism, it shows flexibilization as regards compliance with requirements, which may be considered for their exclusion only when they do not affect the capacity or responsibility of the organization to provide services that fulfill the requirements of the customer and applicable rules and regulations.

The chapter about terms and conditions includes cross-cutting concepts to all standards and explains the most specific ones. Among them, it defines natural protected area (NPA): Zone of existing land surface, subsoil and/or bodies of

water which, due to general interest reasons, especially of scientific, economic, aesthetical or educational character, must be set aside from human free intervention in order to secure the perpetual existence of one or more natural and/or cultural elements. The purpose of said area is the protection and preservation of biological diversity, natural resources and associated cultural resources, and must be surveyed by legal or other efficient means".

In said term, a precise definition has been avoided because it contains a complex notion which ambitiously tries to describe an activity, establish a philosophy and outline a development model. Therefore, it is important to visualize this range of existing definitions for ecotourism or nature tourism and not only a unilateral version of what is and what must be ecotourism.

As an example, let us see some definitions. We may begin with the definition of Ceballos-Lascurain, generally considered as the first person who defined ecotourism. Said definition is also used by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and says that ecotourism is: "environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations".

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as:

"A form of tourism that entails responsible travel to natural areas and which conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people".

Green Globe 21 has adopted the Australian definition of Ecotourism: "Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation".

From the publication of Martha Honey's book "Ecotourism and Sustainable Development", the definition of the authoress has become a widely accepted standard (Merg 1999). The definition proposed by Honey is: "Ecotourism is travel to fragile, pristine and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (usually) small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights (Honey, 1999, page 25)".

With this example we may infer the magnitude of the task developed by the working group on reaching a consensus on the terms and definitions chapter.

Therefore, it is important to compare the previous mentioned bibliography with the main part of the standard and its corresponding appendixes.

Quality, security and environmental management.

In this standard, the subjects "quality", "security" and "environment" are integrally and cross-cuttingly treated and developed, and the concept of management is one of the leading threads, understood as coordinating activities to direct and control an organization (cfr.: ISO 9000 Quality Management Systems, Concepts and vocabulary 3.2.6).

Broad subjects which are not found in other standards of this IRAM-SECTUR series for active tourism are developed in the chapter about Planning. That is why Natural Protected Areas are the most favorable and authentic settings to carry out the activities of alternative, active or adventure tourism.

The subjects we refer to are: policies and objectives in pursuit of resource preservation; social responsibility; environmental education; relationships with other providers; etc. We can also mention marketing, market research analyzing supply and demand, confronted with a pros and cons survey of the different services to be provided within a Natural Protected Area, in order to achieve a balance between environmental impact and visitors' enjoyment.

As regards Environmental Considerations, which constitute typical and specific subjects, two items are developed: Environmental Management and Social Impact Management.

They emphasize the importance of implementing environmental educational programs which include the spreading of low impact practices in all levels (for example, energy and water saving, waste treatment; decisions about purchases; architectonic and structural design, etc.). Organizations, providers and visitors, and local communities are included in these programs.

By including the Social Impact Management topic, issues related to responsible tourism, active policies on corporate social responsibility, fair trade, promotion of local and legal work, taking into account local communities in decision-making processes and environmental-economic benefits, are deeply analyzed.

Implementation and Operation is the most developed chapter of this standard. It asserts that the organization "must guarantee the availability of the essential

resources to establish, implement, maintain and improve the management system. Said resources include human resources, organizational infrastructure, and financial and technological resources, which facilitate efficient management.

Human Resource Management, as an institutional attitude, emphasizes everything related to staff training for a polite treatment of the public, offering quality, security and efficiency in the provision of the service (for example, foreign language, first aid, professionalism, tidiness, etc.); giving incentives to the employees through the implementation of bonus and benefit programs. Then it enumerates the necessary knowledge, either theoretical or practical, for the implementation of this standard. The training courses that will be offered to all the organization staff are a result of this enumeration.

Physical Resources Management defines the guidelines about infrastructure, its functional and aesthetical design, together with a series of operational aspects. These guidelines coincide with those described in the Roads Manual for NPA. The detail level is important because it offers concrete tools which clearly help and guide the organization, though they may affect those enterprises that opt for a rougher style without disregarding customers' satisfaction.

Document and Record Management can be applied to all the standards of this series.

Area Operation Management presents several subsections which supplement item 5.3.3 above:

- The communications system among the different levels and functions of the organization, and with external interested parties.

- The determination of boundaries and zoning according to the organization's use policy which must agree with the proposed environmental policy, security, control and surveillance.

- Security, control and surveillance develop principles to prepare plans tending to minimize dangers and threats in search of environmental security, staff security through work accident treatment and prevention protocols; food security and hygiene; and visitors' security in natural protected areas, informing and warning about the inherent restrictions and/or risks, if any.

- In Visitor care and services, the standard makes a dynamic synthesis when expressing that "the organization must arrange public use under sustainable tourism and recreation criteria, harmonizing the principles related to consumers' rights defense, fair trade and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, so that the benefits derived from these activities may be substantially enjoyed by local communities".

- The section Tourism Program Design in the Natural Protected Area describes the necessary steps to create such design. It begins with a survey and categorization of tourism attractions -natural and cultural-, expected life experiences, capacity, acceptable change limits, etc. Then, it analyses the results of the design through a large series of topics from description and activity objectives, to risk assessment, identification of providers, means of transport, environmental impact effects, etc. Finally, it validates the program design and the changes produced.

-The same must be done with tourism programs exploited under concessions. These programs must observe this sector management standard and the

objectives of area preservation, developing again the thematic trilogy of service quality, environmental quality, and security.

-This section finishes with the subject of the types of insurance to be taken out. Nowadays, the great difficulty is that there are no insurance policies in the market which can be totally adapted to active tourism activities and to visitors' needs, leaving "gaps" and small print clauses which exclude several aspects of the activities and do not adjust to reality. This is a challenge that both public and private sectors must deal with in order to obtain insurance with reliable coverages for either companies or users.

The contents of the final chapters -Acquisitions and Contracts, and Verification- are similar to the rest of the standards in this series, always tending to the cohesion and coherence of the company's policy in relation to its providers, and developing follow-up and measurement programs in order to optimize customer satisfaction and continuously improve tourism products and services.

Without this continuous improvement, tourism products worsen to the point of extinction and take the Natural Protected Area with them. The systemic balance among quality, security and environment can be perceived here. Through continuous improvement, tourism activity does leave traces in natural and cultural environments: traces of care, preservation and sustainability, so that we may enjoy nature forever.

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Introduction

In addition to the management systems and quality models discussed above, other systems and models coexist with them and supplement the general overview about standardization and quality in tourism.

Most of them have been already presented in the chapter "Introduction to standardization and quality in tourism", as the so-called excellence models, but without going deeply into them. Others will be directly introduced and discussed here. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to introduce, study and analyze management systems and models which are linked to the world of tourism and that have not been systematically discussed in the preceding sections.

First, we will deal with the above-mentioned excellence models, specifically with Japan Deming Prizes, Malcolm Baldrige Award, EFQM Model, the Iberoamerican Quality Award and Argentina's National Quality Award.

Later, we will return to management systems to analyze one in particular which is related to education, universities and tourism training institutes: the TedQual system. Said system has been developed as an initiative of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) with progressive improvements in Latin American training establishments. A certified institution already exists in Argentina at the moment, as mentioned in the introduction.

Evidently, models and systems are not exhausted here; however, both aspects contribute to supplement the views reached in previous chapters, and act as a partial closure in the discussion of subjects linked to quality and standardization applied to the tourism sector.

7.1 Excellence models

When we observe that different management models are developed in the quality area, and that these models have an evolutionary character, that is, they are directed to excellence, the explanation lies in the phrase which affirms that *"even if you are in the right way, you will be trampled on if you stay quiet".*

Excellence models framed in National Quality Awards constitute an organization transforming strategy, directed to the global analysis of such organization. In other words, they constitute a strategic instrument which is structured in a series of relevant dimensions of key subjects of the organization, which in turn, are separated in aspects which define the guidelines to be followed in order to achieve excellence.

The need to have quality awards may be understood on the basis of their benefits, which include:

- To favor and promote the exchange of information, knowledge and experience learning, based on the best management practices among companies and institutions.

- To recognize the organizations that have distinguished themselves in the improvement of their competitiveness factors and that may serve as benchmarks.

- To develop competence and training, anticipating market needs and expectations.

- To acquire and develop a discipline directed to self-assessment and to the continued improvement of quality.

In order to apply excellence models, organizations which want to have access to them must have attained a certain maturity level in their quality management system.

Self-assessment: a requirement and an instrument for the award

Self-assessment is a global, systematic and regular examination of the organization's activities and results compared to corporate excellence models. In this examination, the organization may identify:

- Strengths

- Improvement areas

- Action plans to be implemented (this fact makes it possible to prioritize and measure progress).

A positive self-assessment depends on the commitment of the organization's leadership, which spills over to the rest of the persons implied in the process.

Assessment criteria

National Quality Awards constitute a recognition of the organization's management. They are not a quality certificate of a product or service. As central idea of their work with the organizations, all of them have a model to assess and recognize management excellence as regards total quality and continuous improvement. Therefore, in Mexico it is called "*National Model for Total Quality*", in Argentina "*Model for Excellence Corporate Management*", in Uruguay "*Continuous Improvement Model*", in Brazil "*Excellence Criteria*", in Colombia "*Management Excellence Model*".

These models not only aim at the presentation of criteria and proceedings to participate in the award, but also have the purpose of becoming an efficient self-diagnosis instrument which may be used by all the individuals interested in quality as a guide for organizations' improvement.

That is to say, that an organization may use excellence criteria as a reference in order to improve its management system, and make a self-assessment with improvement purposes or as a guide to be nominated for the relevant National Award.

According to this approach, what really matters is the work for which the award is given, and not the award itself.

As historical background of the National Quality Awards which exist nowadays, we can mention that at the beginning of the fifties Deming and Juran developed important theories and practices about quality management systems in Japan, spreading the forms of implementing quality culture among company leaders. As a consequence of the success of these works and guidelines, Deming Prizes for quality were created in 1951 in Japan.

Deming Prize for Quality

Established in honor of W. Edwards Deming, the purpose of the prize was spreading a highly productive approach among all Japanese companies. The

Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE) established the following categories of Deming prizes: Deming prize for individuals, given to those individuals who have made outstanding contributions in the dissemination and development of quality related theories; and Deming Application Prize, with several categories, but given essentially to companies that have stood out in the quality area.66

The Prize is based on the control of results: good results are obtained by the efficient introduction of quality control activities in all the functions of the company. Results are considered as the fruits of past actions and, therefore, through strict control of processes and adequate performance, future results can be modified.

Japanese people sustain that company organization must concentrate its activities on the introduction of a series of quality instruments and techniques common to all functions and levels of the company, such as: process analysis, statistical control methods, improvement groups, etc., in order to obtain good results.

Taking into account these principles, several JUSE experts evaluate companies according to their operational criteria, which are grouped in the following chapters, giving each of them the same importance:

- Quality Policies and Quality Management
- Quality organization and dissemination
- Creation and dissemination of Quality control techniques.
- Collection, transmission and use of Quality information.
- Quality analysis
- Standardization
- Kanri: Daily control, process control, and improvement.

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66 Ishikawa, Kaoru. *¿Qué es el control total de la calidad?* Translated by Margarita Cárdenas. First Edition (fifth reprint), Editorial Norma, Colombia, 1992. P. 6.

- Quality assurance

- Implementation results.

Japanese, non-Japanese, public and private companies may be nominated for a Deming Prize.

Malcolm Baldrige Award

At the beginning of the eighties, the Unites States economy experienced important losses in productivity and competitiveness due to Japanese companies' strength in the markets.

Based on this reality, American company leaders made great efforts to design, plan and enforce programs which would relaunch companies to higher quality levels. As a consequence of this, the Malcolm Baldrige Award was established in 1987, and it was named in honor of its promoter who served as United States Secretary of Commerce from 1981 until his tragic death in 1987.[67] The principal support for the program comes from the Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, established in 1988.

The purpose of this award was to raise awareness about the need to improve quality and performance excellence in order to be capable of competing at an international level.

The award defines the following fundamental quality values:

  i.   customer-oriented quality,

  ii.   leadership,

  iii. continuous improvement and learning,

  iv.   people's participation and development (staff appreciation),

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[67] For further information, visit: http://www.baldrige.nist.gov/

v. quick market response,

vi. Quality planning and prevention,

vii. long-term view;

viii. action-based management,

ix. development of internal and external cooperation (alliances),

x. corporate and citizen responsibility, and

xi. results orientation.

The Malcolm Baldrige Award introduces certain innovations in relation to the Japanese quality prize, as the incorporation of the Quality Leadership concept, which tries to reinforce certain values and concepts that exceed the activities of quality control management of a product, transforming it in Quality in management or management with quality in all corporate functions.

The last modification of the model took place in 1997. Neither public companies nor companies established outside of the United States may be nominated for the Award.

It contemplates seven criteria or categories to assess an organization, which may reach a maximum of 1,000 points. The seven principal criteria are divided into subcategories. Each of them includes certain areas.

Categories and subcategories

a. Leadership (125 points)

    i. Leadership system (85 points);

    ii. Public responsibility and social commitment (40 points).

b. Strategic planning (85 points)

    i. Strategy development (40 points);

    ii. Strategy deployment (45 points).

c. Customer and market approach (85 points)

    i. Customer and market knowledge (40 points);

    ii. Customer satisfaction and relations with customers (45 points).

d. Information and analysis (85 points)

    i. Measurement of the results obtained by the organization (40 points);

    ii. Analysis of the organization's results (45 points).

e. Human Resources Approach (85 points)

    i. Work systems (35 points);

    ii. Employees' education, welfare and development (25 points);

    iii. Employees' welfare and satisfaction (25 points).

f. Management by processes (85 points)

    i. Product and service process management (55 points);

    ii. Support process management (15 points);

    iii. Process management with providers and allies (15 points).

g. Business results (450 points)

    i. Customer satisfaction results (115 points);

    ii. Financial and market behavior results (115 points);

    iii. Human resources results (80 points);

    iv. Providers and associated organizations' results (25 points);

    v. Organization results in relation to efficiency (115 points).

European Quality Award

In 1988, 14 European leading companies from different sectors founded the *"European Foundation for Quality Management"* (EFQM) with the purpose of improving the position of European companies in world markets. The background of EFQM includes the Deming and Malcolm Baldrige models. Many aspects of these models were taken and adapted to the needs of the European entrepreneurial culture.

The European Quality Award was created in 1991. It was based on the European model for total quality management and nowadays is called "EFQM Excellence Entrepreneurial Model". It establishes a non-prescriptive, objective, strict and structured frame of reference for organization diagnosis. Public and private companies qualify for the award.

The last revision of the EFQM Model was made during 2009. The 2010 Model was introduced in the EFQM Annual Forum on September 29, 2009, in Brussels.68 It was a revision and updating of the 8 Excellence Principles, the areas to be treated by the different subcriteria, the consideration of the different criteria and subcriteria and the contents of REDER Assessment Forms.69

In the EFQM Model self-assessment is quite important, since it is the basis for the award. Part of customer and employee satisfaction and the positive impact on society are obtained through initiatives of leadership, policy and strategy, staff management, resources and processes, all of which -in turn- take companies to Excellence. Self-assessment must serve to give companies information about strengths and improvement areas, based on the maturity level of the organization as regards quality.

The European Award broadens the Quality concept, and goes beyond the company level, incorporating social responsibility as a criterion of entrepreneurial management.

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[68] *"EFQM lanza la nueva versión del Modelo EFQM 2010"*. [On line] Available at: http://www.clubexcelencia.org/ejes/EXCELENCIA/ModelosAvanzadosdeGestión/ModeloEFQM201 0/tabid/387/language/es-ES/Default.aspx

[69] The EFQM Model offers the REDER matrix as point awarding instrument. REDER (Resultados, Enfoque, Despliegue, Evaluación y Revisión) is the acronym for Results, Approach, Deployment, Assessment and Revision.

Iberoamerican Quality Award

The Iberoamerican Quality Award is a model conceived, developed and managed by the Iberoamerican Foundation for quality management (FUNDIBEQ). It is a supranational foundation that was formally created on March 18, 1998. The following year, the Iberoamerican Excellence Model for Management was approved at the IX Summit held in Havana. FUNDIBEQ's objective is the global management of quality at the Iberoamerican level in order to *"improve competitiveness within the economic and social networks of Iberoamerican countries, so that the Iberoamerican community may be considered as a Quality environment, where the best providers, allies and investment opportunities can be found";* and its vision is *"to be internationally recognized as the principal Iberoamerican promoter of Quality and Management Excellence".*[70]

The creation of this model allows the existence of a common framework for Iberoamerican companies with experience in management excellence implementation. Either public or private Iberoamerican organizations may qualify for the Iberoamerican Quality Award. The model is composed of five enabling processes criteria:

a. Leadership and style of management (140 points);

b. Policy and Strategy (100 points);

c. People development (140 points);

d. Resources and associates (100 points);

e. Customers (120 points).

These criteria are, in turn, divided into subcriteria which include possible areas or aspects to be considered.

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[70] Available at: http://www.fundibeq.org/DePortada/AIberQualitas.html

Likewise, four results criteria must be added to the five enabling processes criteria:

    f. Customer results (110 points);

    g. People development results (90 points);

    h. Society results (90 points)

    i. Global results (110 points).

By 2008, more than 55 organizations had received the award due to the cooperation of more than 1,000 assessors from 17 countries.

National Quality Award (Argentina)

The National Quality Award Foundation was created on March 15, 1993 as provided by Act 24127/92, approved in August, 1992. Section 8 of the Act establishes that the Administration of the National Quality Award - for the Private Sector, *"shall be in charge of a Foundation created for that purpose by this Act".*

The Ministry of Economy, Public Works and Services of the Nation -the award enforcement authority for the Private Sector- was in charge of calling a meeting of individuals and corporations from all the country to create said Foundation.

Section 2 of Act 24127/92 establishes the objective of the Award: " *the promotion, development and spreading of processes and systems for the continuous improvement of quality in products and services originated in the entrepreneurial sector and in the public administration area, in order to promote the modernization and competitiveness of those organizations".* The following diagram shows the model of business management for excellence.

STRUCTURE OF THE MODEL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE

Source: http://www.premiocalidad.org.ar
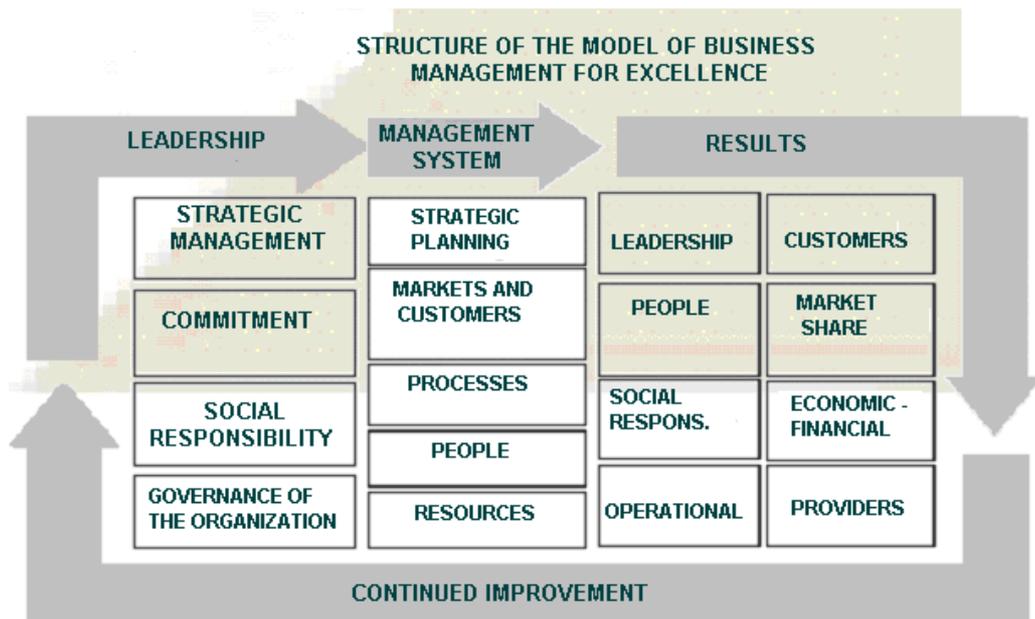
The following companies received the award in 2009:

- **EMBOTELLADORA DEL ATLÁNTICO S.A. (EDASA)**, in the category Large Goods-Producing Company.

- **IBM GLOBAL DELIVERY CENTER ARGENTINA (GDCA)**, in the category Operational Unit of Large Companies or Corporations.

- **NEXTEL ARGENTINA**, in the category Large Service Company.

- **ORGANISMO ARGENTINO DE ACREDITACIÓN**, in the category Non-profit, Medium-sized, Open to Community Organizations.

Up to now, the only tourism organization that received the award was "Hotel Intercontinental" for the private sector, in the category "*Large Service Company*" (in 2000).

7.2 Quality in Education: TedQual

Among the specific management systems, the UNWTO has developed the "Tourism Education Quality" (TedQual), which is a System that Certifies Education and Training Quality, aimed at universities and higher education institutes where tourism degrees (Tourism Masters, Technicians, etc) may be followed. It is a program of the UNWTO Themis Foundation, the purpose of which is to improve education and research in tourism. Therefore, it defines quality requirements that must be satisfactorily fulfilled by educational programs. These requirements are organized within a documentary structure based in processes that include all the aspects related to the management of degree or educational program.

Requirement fulfillment is made through an audit, which may be followed by the issuance of a quality certification.

During 2009, 23 new American, Asian and European educational programs in tourism were certified. In America, "Universidad Argentina de la Empresa" (UADE) became the only certified organization for its Master in Tourism, which is offered at the School of Communication and Design. It was the first Argentine University that obtained this certificate.[71] Up to 2009, the complete list of certified institutions includes:[72]

- *Africa:* Kenya Utalii College (Nairobi, Kenya); University of Johannesburg, Faculty of Management (Johannesburg, South Africa); University of Pretoria (Pretoria, South Africa).

- *America:* California University of Pennsylvania (California, United States); Centro de formación en turismo – CENFOTUR (Lima, Peru); Centro Universitario de Cidade (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil); Instituto Politécnico Nacional (Mexico D.F, Mexico); Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (Quito, Ecuador); Salem State College (Salem MA, United States); The George Washington University (Washington, United States);

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[71] UNWTO Network. TedQual 2009 Annual Revision.
[72] http://www.metafrasi.ad/themis/esp/programas/tedqual/instituciones.html   [Last   visited: March 20, 2010]

Universidad Anáhuac México Norte (Mexico D.F., Mexico); Universidad Anáhuac México Sur (Mexico D.F., Mexico); Universidad Argentina de la Empresa-UADE (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Universidad de San Martín de Porres (Lima, Peru); Université du Québec à Montréal -UQAM (Montreal, Canada); Universidad Externado de Colombia (Bogotá, Colombia); University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada).

- *East Asia and Pacific:* Blue Mountains Hotel School (Crows Nest, Australia); Chinese University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong SAR, China); Hospitality Industry Training & Dev. Centre – VTC (Hong Kong, China); Institute for tourism studies – IFT (Macao, China); Macao University of Science and Technology (Macao, China); Shenzhen Tourism College (Shenzhen, China); The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Hong Kong, China); The University of Queensland (Brisbane, Australia); The University of the South Pacific (Suva, Fiji); University of Hawaii System (Honolulu, United States); Victoria University of Wellington (Wellington, New Zealand).

- *Europe:* Breda University of Professional Education (Breda, Holland); Brussels Business Institute (Brussels, Belgium); Centro Español de Nuevas Profesiones (Madrid, Spain); César Ritz Colleges: IHCR & UCCR (Brig, Switzerland); Eastern Mediterranean University; Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo do Estoril (Estoril, Portugal); Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo (Viana do Castelo, Portugal); Girne American University; INESTUR (Palma de Mallorca, Spain); Institute of hotel & tourism studies "Le Monde" (Atenas, Greece); Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra (Coimbra, Portugal); MIB School of Management (Trieste, Italy); Russian International Academy of Tourism (Moscow, Russia); School of Business Administration Turība (Riga, Latvia); The Higher Hotel Institute, Cyprus –HHIC- (Nicosia, Cyprus); The University of Surrey (Guildford, England); Minoan International College -formerly TRINITY International School of Tourism Management- (Creta, Greece); Universidad Antonio de Nebrija (Madrid, Spain); Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (Valencia, Spain); Università Bocconi (Milán, Italy);

Università degli Studi del Molise (Termoli, Italy); Università degli Studi di Perugia (Perugia, Italy); Università di Bologna (Bologna, Italy); Universitat de Les Illes Balears (Palma de Mallorca, Spain); Universitat de Valencia (Valencia, Spain); University of Brighton (Brighton, United Kingdom); Universityof Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics (Ljubljana, Slovenia); University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics & Bussines (Zagreb, Croatia).

The system includes three basic components: quality standards, quality audit and quality certification.

Standards to be implemented contain six dimensions or chapters which include the following requirements:

a. Employers (corporation and industry);

b. Students;

c. Curricula;

d. Faculty and school;

e. Infrastructure;

f. Administration (management system).

After implementing the system requirements, the application for an audit is submitted and the educational program is eventually certified for the corresponding period.