

# Planning and sustainable development: a proposal applied to the hydrothermal complex in Caldas Novas, Brazil

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**Abstract:** One of the most important justifications for applying tourism planning is the danger of permitting continuous development until the point of saturation that may ultimately lead to a destination's decline. One of the essential functions of planning is therefore to provide a strategy base that allows destinations to confront change successfully. This article focuses on the elaboration of a tourism planning method based essentially on the most effective procedures identified, through an analysis of the contributions of various authors who suggest methods of proved efficiency. As a result the authors develop an original system that incorporates the positive points and avoids the weaknesses of all the proposals analysed while adapting it to the Brazilian context and applying it to a specific case study (Caldas Novas in Goiás). The proposal is structured on the basis of two key priorities: a physical focus guided towards the sustainability of the environment; and a social focus that reinforces the role of the receiving community in the tourist experience. The authors conclude that, as a result, this method offers considerable guarantees of success in achieving its goals.

**Key words:** tourism planning, destination management, sustainable development, hydrothermal tourism, Caldas Novas, Brazil.

## Planificación y desarrollo sostenible: una propuesta aplicada al complejo hidrotermal en Caldas Novas, Brasil

**Resumen:** Una de las razones más significativas para hacer una planificación turística es el peligro del desarrollo continuo hasta llegar a la saturación y posible declive del destino turístico. Una de las funciones esenciales de la planificación es proveer una base de estrategias que permita al destino hacer frente al cambio. El artículo trata de la elaboración y aplicación de un método de planificación turística basado esencialmente en el reconocimiento de los procedimientos más eficaces, según un análisis de las aportaciones de diferentes autores, que nos sugiere métodos de comprobada solvencia y nos abre las posibilidades para desarrollar un sistema propio que contemple los puntos positivos y evite las debilidades de todas las propuestas analizadas. Se ha estructurado nuestra propuesta, en un enfoque físico orientado hacia la sostenibilidad del medio, y en un enfoque social que refuerza el papel de la comunidad receptora en la experiencia turística. Las autoras concluyen que el resultado de ese método ofrece considerables garantías de éxito en la obtención de sus objetivos.

**Palabras claves:** planificación turística, gestión de destinos, desarrollo sostenible, turismo hidrotermal, Caldas Novas, Brasil.

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## 1. Introduction

Some of the most important reasons for applying planning systems in tourism are the risks that accompany continuous development that can eventually lead to saturation and even to the decline of destinations, as was clearly described in Butler's (1980) pioneer destination life cycle theory. Through adequate planning, this life cycle can be extended, even indefinitely, if change is anticipated and adequate measures are incorporated to adapt the destination to the changes that occur. Hence one of the essential objectives of a planning system should be the provision of a strategic base that makes it possible to successfully confront changes. Destinations have two options: to react when changes occur, an option that may include irreversible negative impacts; or to develop plans and instruments that evaluate the initial situation, anticipate the future and select a number of actions that take advantage of the opportunities that the area offers. Thus, although the first objective of planning is to control the negative effects of tourism, it is also the path that can ensure long-term success of tourism activity in a specific destination.

Without doubt, the overall sustainability of a destination depends on a combination of environmental, socio-cultural and economic aspects and factors. However, in the authors' opinion, too often economic factors take pre-eminence over the other two components of sustainability in planning proposals. The research project on which this article is based attempted to address and redress this situation, by parting from a geographical base that focused principally on spatial and territorial planning, the processes involved, the corresponding tools and the actions implied. Ignoring economic issues would, of course, invalidate the sustainability goals set, but these are considered at the level of implementation of all measures.

The article therefore analyses a wide range of prior contributions to planning theory and, above all, planning methods proposed by other authors in the past, mainly from a similarly geographical viewpoint and with comparable objectives, and evaluates their viability, by pointing out their key aims and – in the view of the authors – their omissions. In the light of this analysis, the authors propose a new planning methodology that aims to incorporate the strengths of each method while avoiding the weaknesses identified. The key aspects incorporated are: a global territorial perspective; environmental conservation; the role of both the public administrations and the private sector; and the social priorities of the local population. The resulting methodology is applied in a case study that focuses on the thermal tourism complex of

Caldas Novas, Brazil, in order to illustrate its feasibility.

## 2. Literature review: The contribution of planning theory and past experience

Many authors (Acerenza, 1992; Akehurst, 2001; Bissoli, 2000; Getz, 1987; Hall, 2001; Hernández, 1982; Jenkins, 1995; López Oliveras, 1998; Mill, Morrison, 1992; Murphy, 1985; Pearce, 1989; Vera *et al.*, 1997) stress the range of benefits derived from tourism planning and propose different elaboration procedures. Nevertheless, one recurrent element in these proposals is that success is best guaranteed where close collaboration between the tourist sector and the local administration exists, and especially when the private sector is actively involved.

As already indicated, a diversity of tourism planning methods and techniques exists, ranging from simple approaches to methods that require complex theoretical and technical knowledge. Pearce (1989) pointed out that tourism planning had traditionally been based on land use zoning codes, the development of determined areas, the regulation of building heights, types and densities, the enhancement of interesting cultural, historical and natural elements and, finally, on infrastructure provision, including roads and basic sewage. The accent was then on economic development, but more recently environmental and socio-cultural preoccupations have been incorporated into tourism planning.

In a similar vein, Getz (1987) and Hall, Jenkins (1995) have expressed the opinion that tourism planning approaches and methods will not remain constant in the future, but will evolve to satisfy new tourist demands. Getz identified four approaches: impulsionism; an economic-industrial oriented approach; physical-spatial approach; and a community approach that reinforces the role of the local destination community in the tourist experience. The different approaches are neither mutually exclusive nor necessarily sequential. Hall (2001) added a fifth approach: sustainable tourism planning, asserting that, in the private sector, the predominating trend in tourism planning is impulsionism. In Murphy's (1985) opinion, this has led to centralised planning that has excluded the receiving community from the process, in such a way that they have been unable to voice their opinions and much less exercise a minimum control of their place of residence. Nonetheless, academic discussion on tourism planning focuses on the need to integrate social and environmental considerations to the economic impulse that is at the base of tourism development.

Hall (2001) stresses that the approaches proposed by Getz (1987), Murphy (1985) and Gunn (1994) are built from normative models of tourism planning based on community participation. Hall (2001) and Akehurst (2001) quote examples of different processes applied in the development of plans and strategies in various destinations. The authors demonstrate that planning to favour a specific product is much more conditioned by local political and social circumstances than by the suitability of the product in question. To illustrate the assertion, Hall presents a study of the downtown Darling Harbour district of Sydney, where top-down planning led to the implantation of a space for consumption, leaving aside civic values. As a result, this district -that was rehabilitated as a centre for leisure activities and events- clearly reflects private interests and values. Thus, the emphasis placed on certain social and economic interests relegated other community interests, especially those of the traditional residents with low spending power. The general conclusion that can be reached is that the problem arises, not from the existence or absence of a tourism development plan, but rather from the type of tourist product that is introduced.

Akehurst's (2001) article supports an approach whereby the opinions expressed by the local community should be taken into consideration when elaborating tourism planning proposals. The specific objective of development should be the creation of tourism products that benefit the local inhabitants as well as the visitors. The example chosen to illustrate this option is the municipal development plan for the Polish city of Kalisz which includes a plan for the tourist sector. The methodology developed by the research team recognised the importance of different components and phases: audits, analysis, dialogue, commitment and feedback among the local population, visitors and investors in the tourism development process, followed by the posterior definition of goals, strategies, action plans and monitoring to evaluate the results. An important element was the role of the local community that, through elected representatives, were to accept and support the plan -which included not only the needs to be satisfied, but also when, where and how it would be implemented- and decide who would assume responsibility for its coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the actions proposed. In fact, at a less detailed and precise level, Hernández (1982) had already addressed the issue of tourism planning from an essentially economic, but also partially social, viewpoint.

Acerenza (1992) also evaluated some tourism planning models, especially the PASOLP model

that was developed by M. Baud-Bovy in 1977 and is based on the tourist product development concept. The model consists of four phases: research and analysis; tourism policy and tourist flow definition; preparation of a physical development plan; and, finally, impact analysis. The author concludes that this model is oriented towards the spatial planning of a destination rather than overall planning of tourist activity. Bissoli (2000), in her book on municipal tourism planning, develops a computer programme designed to accumulate an unusually extensive data base that is stored in a reliable manner, thus increasing the quality of procedures and enabling rapid responses in the on-going planning process. This programme can make a highly significant contribution in tourism planning where ample statistics are available or where the project includes more than one municipality. In any case, the computer technology applied in the methodology reduces the time required for analysis and facilitates data updating.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that such methods are not totally innovative. In fact, another relevant contribution had already been made by López Oliveras (1998), who successfully developed inventory and tourism resource analysis methods for the elaboration of plans to fit in with the tourist vocation of the corresponding study zone. He proposed the sub-division of the area on the basis of the tourist vocation of each zone, taking into account tourism potential and the relative concentration or dispersal of resources and products, arguing that the key problem is the insufficient use of this potential to achieve high quality and competitiveness. This clearly defined framework, including the delimitation of homogenous areas, makes it possible to apply integrated proposals.

For all of the authors quoted, the first element in any planning process is the definition of a target image. However, this target is seldom clearly identified at the outset beyond some general, vaguely defined characteristics. A second diagnostic stage involves the description and analysis of the existing situation, to acquire a clearly ordered, complete and accurate picture, thus identifying the current state of the tourism activity and its natural or spontaneous development. With this acquired knowledge, it is then possible to pinpoint the aspects that require alteration in order to comply with the target image and hence proceed to the following stage: the clear and detailed definition of the specific objectives and aims of the planning process. The process finally focuses on strategy determination and a more general consideration of the pattern of development of each activity in order to achieve the proposed objectives and thus move towards the "ideal situation". In the authors'

opinion, various alternative strategies must be analysed and evaluated before making the final choice, as this is a crucial stage on which the success or failure of the entire process depends.

Yet another valuable contribution is made by Mill, Morrison (1992) in their chapter on "The tourist system" and some aspects are worthy of mention. Firstly, they stress the importance of market research in order to identify the most competitive destinations or locations, strengths and weaknesses, and differentiating initiatives to convert the place in question into something unique among its competitors. Another significant contribution of this method is the classification of tourism activities, focusing on the different possible uses for resources, their power of attraction, tourist motivation and the seasonality of activities—which is a well-recognised factor in the fluctuation of demand-. Such an analysis therefore helps to identify activities that compensate trends to falling demand in the low season. The authors also develop the synthetic stage at considerable depth, understanding it to be the most important and creative part of the process. This then enables them to present a tourism plan under five separate headings: tourism development; tourism marketing; tourist industry organisation; community implication; and tourism activities and support services. Each of these five aspects is analysed from two scenarios: the current situation and the future ideal outcome. Thus, in the following stage of the process, specific objectives and tourism development strategies must be designed to bridge the gap between the two, all of which are finally included in a detailed plan, indicating the actions and measures necessary to accomplish the objectives and implement the strategies. Specific programmes are developed for each of the five aspects indicated.

Vera *et al.* (1997) also contribute useful elements to be considered in drawing up a planning methodology, by stressing the importance of taking into account the pre-existing structure of the territory, in addition to economic, socio-cultural and environmental elements. They argue that existing patterns and types of spatial organization considerably condition the results of new proposals. For these authors, this is especially important in consolidated tourism destinations, where revitalization strategies often crash head on with surviving *fordist* tourism patterns and structures. In such circumstances, there exists the risk of planning for the future without bearing in mind the presence of the obsolete urban and regional structures that mass tourism generated in the past.

All the proposals examined above have certain common elements: the planning scheme is based on

a prior process of resource analysis and diagnosis, as a basis for the establishment of aims, objectives and outcomes to be achieved through planning, and, for this purpose, specific measures and actions to be undertaken are elaborated in detail. The various authors' proposals are mutually complementary, as some outline certain stages and aspects in greater detail than others. It is, however, evident that various approaches to tourism planning have been used in the past, ranging from top-down centralised imposition to those based on the participation of the local community. However, in the opinion of the authors of this new proposal, the integration of local communities in the planning process is an essential component in order to achieve success. In particular, special attention should be given to the social perspective and local community participation mechanisms (Akehurst, 2001); the development of a method that incorporates territorial resource planning (López Oliveras, 1998; Vera *et al.*, 1997); the desegregation of strategies (Hernández, 1982); and the important implications of tourist motivation and market research (Mill, Morrison, 1992). The following section outlines the new planning method that bears these considerations in mind.

### 3. Proposal: A tourism planning method for sustainable development

This new tourism planning method proposal is based on the recognition of the most effective procedures, aiming to incorporate the most significant elements of all the contributions examined above, by identifying the strong points of well-tried methods and avoiding their weaknesses, thus leading to the development of a new system. It must be borne in mind that the key underlying objective is the sustainability of the natural environment, considered not only from the ethical perspective of its conservation for use by future generations, but also as a basic requisite for the survival of a form of tourism that is based on natural resources. As already indicated, the existing methods have many elements in common, but some stress certain stages in detriment—or the absence—of others. As the new proposal is outlined below, the positive contributions will be described together with the reasons for including them.

Bissoli's (2000) tourism planning methodology serves as a base to develop a logical procedure chain, beginning with the obtainment of valid information on the true situation in the place in question and finally leading to the tourism planning process. At this first stage, aims and objectives are determined; this is followed by the definition of suitable strategies to achieve these goals; and, finally,

specific short, medium and long-term proposals are formulated. This author's methodology does not, however, contemplate a stage involving the acquisition of prior knowledge about the study area. In other words, there is no definition of existing typologies, nor an analysis of the corresponding local or global trends; neither is reference made to the present tourists' motivations. Another omission occurs in the stage of analysis and diagnosis, as no procedure to measure interest on the part of the local community is contemplated. The development plan focuses exclusively on the formulation of sectorial plans, but does not propose follow-up and evaluation programmes for a posterior adjustment stage.

As various authors have pointed out –and at the risk of stating the obvious- it must be emphasized that planning in favour of one product or another is more frequently conditioned by local political and social influences than by the virtues of the product. This new proposal is based on the firm belief that the design of a sustainable tourism destination strategy can only be justified on the basis of a profound evaluation –both physical and territorial- of the present and potential tourism resources in the zone, and is the only route to identify which type of tourism should be stimulated and which market segment will benefit. In this respect, López Oliveras's work (1998) contributes to this new planning proposal, by indicating pertinent methods for the inventory and analysis of tourism resources that facilitate the sub-division of the territory to create a balanced interpretation of the vocation of the study zone. However, like Bissoli (*op cit.*), López Oliveras does not include a stage of prior recognition of the study area, nor does he contemplate the analysis of local community interests or posterior adjustments. This omission is, however, covered –and adequately justified- by Vera *et al.* (1997).

An additional premise for this new proposal is that decentralised planning that allows the local community to participate, incorporates a large variety of political and social, economic and environmental factors that are closely adapted to the purpose in question. This participation helps guarantee the long-term economic viability of tourism much better. Akehurst (2001) proposes such a tourism development method, involving the destination community right from the earliest planning stages. His proposal can thus be differentiated from those of Bissoli and López Oliveras through its reinforcement of the stage of evaluation of community interests, although the same gaps as encountered in other authors' proposals still exist.

It is therefore of fundamental importance to organize seminars and meetings among representa-

tives of the local community, the private sector and public administrators, in order to identify various aspects: the main deficiencies of the local tourism sector and possible threats facing the activity and environmental quality in the future; the potentially most attractive tourism resources; and the most economically viable types of tourism that they identify and would be interested in developing.

In his proposal, Hernández (1982) introduces the concept of “the desired image”, as the guiding thread throughout, thus leading and focusing the whole promotion process towards the targeted demand segments; this element will be incorporated into this new proposal. In detriment, Hernández pays insufficient attention to resource planning, so, in this respect, López's (*op. cit.*) work is a much better guideline. However, the former author proposes well designed subdivisions for the formulation of tourism development strategies which could be satisfactorily adapted to the circumstances in this study. The weaknesses in his method are similar to those encountered in Bissoli's (*op. cit.*) work; that is, he omits the stage of prior knowledge collection, and does not propose spatial planning or an adjustment stage composed of follow-up and evaluation stages.

Mill, Morrison's (1992) methodological proposal is quite wide-ranging, incorporating most of the stages identified so far. Nevertheless, it omits the stages of: identification of the local tourism product and the main trends affecting it; assessment of community interests; identification of territorial limits; and, finally, formulation of spatial plans. This new proposal, while comprising all the stages described by Mill, Morrison –albeit with different names- has incorporated a more profound consideration of certain aspects, such as resource analysis, given that the underlying preoccupation is the sustainability of the natural environment over and above the economic aspects of tourism activity, even though the importance of these is recognized.

### 3.1. New Tourism Planning Proposal

Following this critical analysis of the major contributions on tourism planning methodology, the various stages that comprise this new methodology proposal can be outlined. Five key stages –each including further sub-divisions- are identified and described, and the choice is justified.

- a) **Prior analysis of the destination:** with the objective of identifying the tourism structure, development trends and tourist motivations in the choice of the region. This analysis makes it possible to pinpoint development alternatives for the future, which would lead to higher demand and satisfaction rates, based on current realities.

Although some of the authors cited refer to certain procedures that would be included in this stage, they are, in the authors' opinion, superficial and incomplete and therefore unsatisfactory. This proposal contemplates a profound analysis of the characteristics of the existing tourism structure and the main trends; a comparative analysis of the development of similar tourism patterns elsewhere; and the identification of the motivations of current demand. This information is considered essential in order to define the measures necessary to move towards more sustainable forms of tourism while, at the same time, obtaining maximum economic profitability.

- b) **Diagnosis and Analysis:** the detailed study of supply and demand, the characteristics of tourism resources and local community interests, in order to provide fundamental data for defining new service and product provision in the future, based on truly feasible proposals, from the perspective of potential promoters and the local community. In addition, this analysis will serve to identify feasible new products, as possible promoting agents are included in the process. Obviously all authors include these procedures in some form in their proposals. This new methodology, however, places additional accent on the environmental perspective and the detailed analysis of tourism resources, considering them the base for a planning process that will guarantee environmental conservation. This may cut back short-term gains, but will ensure medium and long-term survival of the destination by maintaining the quality of the natural tourism resources. Moreover, the inclusion of the interests of the local community—both the public and private sectors— in the analysis, confers respect to them and involves them actively in the development process. Such procedures are included in planning undertaken with a social approach, while they are omitted in the case of centrally planned methodologies.
- c) **Territorial conditioning factors:** an analysis of the characteristics of the natural environment with a view to delimiting different levels of use for tourism purposes, in order to establish sustainable use parameters throughout the area. The underlying objective is to facilitate both resource conservation and management.
- d) **Development plan:** the drawing up of the actual plan, including its aims and objectives, strategies and specific action plans. Such plans should be both sectorial and spatial, and serve as the base for tourism development for essentially homogeneous zones. This phase constitutes the synthesis of the preceding stages, and the plans

should be considered management instruments for local tourism managers, as they clarify the most viable initiatives for achieving sustainable tourism development in their respective regions.

- e) **Plan revision:** the monitoring and evaluation of the planning process, that should make it possible to identify—and correct— incompatibilities that may arise<sup>1</sup>. All plans should be continuously revised and updated in order to guarantee long-term success, as problems can arise as measures are applied and conditions—often provoked by external factors— can change through time. Each specific action plan should be accompanied by a separate monitoring and revision plan, including pre-established indicators and indices, in consonance with local parameters and with the approval of the local community and agents that are involved.

The synoptic table that follows (Table 1) resumes the principal methodological contributions of other authors in comparison with the current proposal.

#### 4. Application: Tourism planning in the hydro-thermal complex of Caldas Novas, Brasil

Tourism development in the study area is closely related to the use of the local thermal waters. It could be supposed that these would have given rise to health spas, but, in fact, the tourism structure is more akin to a mass sun–sea model, in which thermal swimming pools substitute the sea. Fordist processes have guided development; thus the current product is stereotyped and mono-thematic, with correspondingly unimaginative lodging, complementary activity and marketing structures, a characteristic that leads to a similarly restricted focus of motivations on the demand side. In the quest for high demand and short-term gains, investors, by and large, have ignored environmental conservation goals and hence the thermal resources have been over-exploited. However, in recent years certain Postfordist elements have been incorporated without actually transforming the basic structure. Certainly, tourists are now better informed than before, expect higher quality facilities and many of them demonstrate some environmental consciousness, even though there is no significant change in their motivations. At the same time, it must be recognized that the product spectrum has not widened sufficiently to satisfy other motivations, in spite of the existing potential for diversification. Moreover, it is questionable whether or not the introduction of Postfordist initiatives would be of interest to current demand or would be capable of attracting new demand sectors.

**Table 1: Principal methodological contributions to tourism planning**

		Authors analysed					New proposal
		Akehurst	Bissoli	López	Hernandez & Alfonso	Mill & Morrison	
<b>Principal contribution</b>		Social perspective	Computer technology	Environmental perspective	Strategic desegregation	Implications of motivation	Combines all contributions
		Community participation		Tourism resource analysis		Market analysis	Adjustment to local conditions
Stages	Sub-stages						
<b>1. Prior knowledge</b>	Local tourism pattern						
	Market trends						
	Tourist motivation						
<b>2. Diagnosis and Analysis</b>	Supply and demand						
	Tourism resources						
	Community interests						
<b>3. Territorial factors</b>	Territorial definition						
<b>4. Development plan</b>	Objectives						
	Outcome definition						
	Overall strategy						
	Sectorial plan						
	Spatial plan						
<b>5. Posterior revision and adjustment</b>	Monitoring						
	Evaluation						

Key:  Aspects encountered in proposal.  Aspects not encountered in proposal. Source: Authors.

The initial supposition of this proposal is that planning constitutes a tool capable of transforming traditional mass tourism into a more sustainable activity. However, in the case of Caldas Novas, the challenge of having to redress spontaneity, disorganization and the lack of balanced development objectives through more rational use of resources places the sustainability paradigm as a key point of reference in the process of tourism activity planning in the municipality. In applying

the new methodology described above, apart from analysing the geographical and touristic context of the study area, data on spa tourism in general was compiled, including information on current international trends in the sector. This led to a diagnosis of the case study area that bore in mind aspects such as: supply, demand and tourist motivations; the nature of the tourism environment (built and natural); the legal framework of thermal waters;

existing infrastructures; municipal management; and stakeholders' opinions.

Thus, the completion of the first two stages of the process made it possible to proceed to the stage of formulation of the corresponding Tourism Development Plan, divided into two complementary parts:

- 1) The Basic Spatial Strategy (BPS), that provides a territorial perspective, as not all areas possess the same quantity and quality of resources, and so are neither equally vulnerable to tourism impacts nor equally suitable for tourism development. Hence, as has already been justified, the area must be subdivided, indicating different use levels and corresponding management codes for each sector;
- 2) The Basic Sectorial Strategy (BES), that approaches tourism from a thematic perspective, and makes it possible to develop plans for specific products capable of diversifying the product base and reinforcing tourism activity through a more adequate use of resources.

Within the framework of the BPS, an environmental protocol and use code –to be developed later in greater detail– determined for each type of zone. This element stresses the value of environmental studies, not only in consonance with global trends postulating that the maintenance of environmental quality reinforces the value of economic initiatives, but also because tourists are increasingly critical and demanding on environmental issues and this affects their satisfaction evaluations. In this case, greater attention to environmental and social factors was deemed especially necessary, in an attempt to redirect and revitalize business, accompanied by management policy changes aimed at encouraging the development of alternative types of tourism.

The BES is composed of three specific plans: the Institutional Enhancement Plan (IEP), the Tourism Product Plan (TPP) and the Promotion Plan (PP), in accordance with the methodology already defined. These plans propose a wide range of measures for each type of tourism that is considered feasible: legal and political; urbanistic and structural; education and training; promotion (marketing and commercialization). These plans, in fact, constitute an important tool to overcome one of the main deficits in existing tourism development strategies in the destination.

In the case of Caldas Novas, the fifth stage is also extremely important, as a follow-up of public management is absolutely essential, together with the creation of cooperatives and the drawing up of good practice codes. Another key element in the

monitoring process is periodical research to detect changes in preferences, satisfaction levels, the cost – benefit pattern and social and environmental impacts.

#### 4.1 Basic Spatial Strategy (BPS): the territorial dimension of the plan

As has already been seen, Vera *et al.* (1997) provide solid arguments in favour of the inclusion of the territorial dimension in tourism planning, considering it especially valuable in consolidated tourism destinations with surviving *fordist* tourism patterns and structures and, certainly, Caldas Novas lies in this category. López Oliveras (1998) proposed a sub-division of the area to be planned through the delimitation of homogenous areas, in order to make the application of integrated proposals possible. These criteria have been applied in this case study, thus establishing a series of zones based on environmental uniformity and resource homogeneity. The main purpose of this division is to introduce coherence in public actions, with the objective of achieving short, medium and long-term territorial balance and cohesion.

Environmentally uniform areas were identified on a cartographic base and were presented in the Framework Plan. A total of eight categories were identified through the analysis of the interaction of various physical attributes, namely: geology, soil science, geomorphology, hydrology and vegetation. For each zone, suitable land uses are indicated based on these characteristics and the degree of fragility. The categories range from areas where use is highly restricted and priority is given to the preservation of wildlife and hydro-resource protection, to areas designated for agricultural and urban use. Tourism resources and existing products were superimposed on this cartographic base, thus making it possible to identify concentrations and the location of specialized products. The combination of these two typologies –physical characteristics and tourism potential– led to the determination of six categories of Tourism Use Areas (TUA), for which the key defining factors were: environmental quality, environmental carrying capacity and attractiveness.

- 1) **Restricted TUA**, in which conservation is the absolute priority and human activities can only be developed through specific activity plans that guarantee the integrity of the natural resources.
- 2) **Partially restricted TUA**, where only low intensity and low impact tourism activities can be developed so that such original landscapes as exist within them are maintained in their original state.



- 3) **Rural TUA**, that can support higher visitor levels, where landscape changes are permitted in order to stimulate low intensity tourism activities and where visitor interaction with the environment and the local community are priority objectives.
- 4) **Semi-intensive TUA**, that can support intensive tourist demand, albeit with certain controls exercised on tourism activities in order to avoid negative impacts on fragile natural resources within the area.
- 5) **Intensive TUA**, where the development of mass tourism is permitted.
- 6) **Area devoid of tourist interest**, due to the lack of potentially attractive resources and potential investors in their development.

Obviously, each area is clearly delimited and possesses specific characteristics. Nevertheless, they are not hermetic, as they constitute dynamic systems that are open to external influences and, consequently, are evolving constantly. An examination of the distribution and characteristics of the different areas, including an analysis of the resources implied and the identification of the tourism forms that are best suited to each specific area, reveals the existence of two clearly defined zones: that of tourism concentration and that of tourism expansion. The former includes the majority of potential tourism resources. This corresponds to the Intensive TUA and includes the urban centre of Caldas Novas, the hotel and leisure complex of the Pousada do Rio Quente and the Restricted TUA. Three areas are defined as zones of tourism expansion: the Partially Restricted TUA, the Rural TUA and the Semi-intensive TUA. However, the first two of these are made up of small, disconnected areas, a characteristic that would restrict tourism development and cause management problems.

A final consideration is the issue of connectivity and accessibility, not only for visitors, but also for nature. In the first case, connections between the intensive and semi-intensive TUAs are necessary, in order to generate new tourist flows towards the developing areas. A valid option in this case would be the creation of cycle tracks and pedestrian paths. A paved road would be the best option to provide access to the Rural TUA, while serving, at the same time, to integrate this zone with that of major tourism concentrations. Finally, better connections between the main tourism zone and the Partially Restricted TUA are essential to stimulate visitor flows towards a greater variety of products.

Similarly, ecological corridors linking different sectors of the Partially Restricted TUA and the Restricted TUA must be created, in order to guarantee genetic flora and fauna flows and, consequently, the survival of wild life in the region. This measure would also have parallel beneficial effects on tourism, as it would increase the attractiveness of these two zones. Hence, albeit the subdivisions identified, analysis reveals the paradoxical need to establish intercommunications, with the objective of conserving valuable elements capable of attracting visitor flows and facilitating access to such places.

The process has now reached the point where tourism use potential and risks generated as a result of the use of each area have been identified, so that a basic spatial tourism development strategy can be formulated, respecting, as already indicated, community interests and sustainability parameters. Nevertheless, its implementation requires discipline and this can best be achieved by applying regulations. Hence, an Environmental Regulation Plan for each TUA should be drawn up. However, given that this is a competence reserved by the municipal and higher authorities, this study is limited to providing a "Guide of suitable protective measures and actions to potentiate resource use", bearing in mind the specific characteristics of the resources and outcomes such as the conservation of environmental quality. This guide thus constitutes a synthesis of various planning phases which together define good practices in resource use and protection, as set out in Table 2. The first column classifies each TUA according to fragility and conservation levels. At this stage, the Regulation Plan must be drawn up. It comprises the biophysical, social and administrative attributes of each area, together with a statement of appropriate protection levels. The next step comprises: the identification of the best opportunities for creating new tourism products; the desired future environmental conditions and tourism structure in each area; and, in consequence, the most viable types of use and the associated risks.

The proposal of both protective and development measures aims at adding depth and specificity to the study of each area. On the basis of this information, the authorities (as already mentioned) should be able to draw up specific regulating plans incorporating social and environmental indicators for the various parameters involved, together with a compulsory monitoring process for application to natural conditions and the level of tourist satisfaction with the products available.

**Table 2: Guide for necessary initiatives, according to Tourism Use Area (TUA) type**

TUA type	Types of use	Risks	Protective and development measures	Corresponding legislation
<b>Restricted</b>	“Soft” tourism	Integrity of natural resources threatened	Prohibition of use of most fragile zones Control of visitor flows Infrastructure development	Public Use Plan including environmental education programmes and monitoring tools
<b>Partially restricted</b>	Low intensity tourism	Transformation of original landscapes	Controlled resource exploitation Prohibition of high impact activities	Tourism Activities Plan
<b>Rural</b>	Implication of local community in tourism process Demand spatially dispersed and related to rural heritage	Minor landscape changes	Application of environmental ethical code (minimum impact and limitations on resource use) Community involvement in planning process	Regulation of programme of activities and events
<b>Semi- intensive</b>	Development to maintain tourism flows	Lack of control of tourism activities, endangering more fragile natural resources	Spatial dispersion of permitted uses	Reservoir Exploitation Plan Regulation of use of engine propelled boats
<b>Intensive</b>	Mass tourism	Degradation of tourism environment	Infrastructure development to protect resources while facilitating their use for tourism purposes	Overall Plan and Regulation Code for the exploitation of tourism resources

Source: Authors.

#### 4.2. Basic sectorial strategy (BES): instruments for tourism development

The basic sectorial strategy is comprised of three tourism plans: an Institutional Reinforcement Plan, which constitutes the key framework for implementing measures; a Tourism Product Plan which is an essential component in all plans; a Promotion Plan, without which demand for the products cannot be created. These three plans include proposals for specific actions, based on realities identified through fieldwork, in-depth interviews and seminars. The various actions are classified according to the time considered neces-

sary for their implementation: short-term (up to 2 years), medium-term (2-4 years) and long-term (5-8 years), taking into consideration the time needed to execute each action, the difficulties involved in the implementation of certain measures, and the inevitable delay in the modification of demand patterns.

The three plans are outlined in Tables 3-7, a form of presentation that intends to provide clarity and conciseness. The Institutional Reinforcement Plan proposes legislative and political actions (Table 3)<sup>2</sup> and measures to upgrade education and training for the tourism sector (Table 4).

**Table 3: Legislative and Political measures under Municipal Council responsibility**

Action *	Agent(s) Involved	Objective
Regulate and set up an Economic and Tourism Development Fund financed with 6% of municipal income for tourism oriented actions (S)*	Municipal Council, which must pass a Municipal Law dictating the assignment of 6% of municipal income to tourism oriented actions	Facilitate improvements through increased municipal funding, given the importance of the tourism sector in the municipality
Set up a Tourism Quality Evaluation Committee within the Municipal Council (M)	Municipal Council, which must set up a Committee composed of persons from the local tourism sector	Strengthen the tourism sector through its representation in the local administrative structure, as members of a specific body that proposes and coordinates initiatives to ensure the quality of tourism products
Create a Municipal Tourism Board (CMT) (S)	All the key enterprises in the local tourism industry should be represented in CMT	Elaborate projects and programmes to support the tourism sector and hence coordinate the process of tourism development
Enhance the role of the Municipal Tourism Secretariat (SMT) and the Municipal Cultural Secretariat (SMC) through an increase in human resources and built infrastructures (M/L)	Municipal Council, which should use the extra financial resources designated locally and also apply for funding from superior administrative levels	Reorient public investment in the sector towards sustainable products and practices
Celebrate an annual Municipal Tourism Forum (S/M/L)	SMT, responsible for the organisation and coordination of the Forum	Maintain contacts and Exchange of ideas among the various state organisms
Update regulations on environmental preservation, subsoil contamination risks, thermal source exploitation, etc. (S)	SMA, in collaboration with the corresponding legislative bodies	Elaborate proposals and regulations and guarantee their application (including control and inspection)
Revise the General Municipal Plan (POG) of urban land use (S/M)	Municipal Council in collaboration with the local community	Optimise activities while avoiding haphazard urban expansion and irreversible environmental damage, thus safeguarding its quality

\*Key: (S) short term; (M) medium term; (L) long term

Source: Authors.

**Table 4: Educational and Training measures**

Action *	Agent(s) Involved	Objective
Create and implement a permanent ecologic conscience programme (M)*	Regional universities in their creation SMT in their implementation, with the collaboration of local tourism sector	Avoid negative environmental impacts caused by visitors
Organise seminars for updating information about the local tourism structure (S/M/L)	SMT and CMT in organisation and promotion Local tourism entrepreneurs and community as participants	Increase understanding of the weak and fragile points of the tourist reception infrastructures
Organise specialised courses on tourism topics for schoolteachers (S/M/L)	Regional universities and other local higher education institutions	Provide local teachers with more knowledge and a better understanding of the tourism system that can then be transmitted to the sector
Include tourism topics in the school curriculum (M)	SME for including modules on tourism in the school educational programme	Provide general education on tourism development and its impacts, given the development of tourism associated enterprises by the local population
Upgrade training in tourism-related employment (S/M)	SEBRAE and SMT, by including employees from the tourism sector in the FAT programme	Provide better service to tourists and improve product quality
Introduce a tourism education programme for adolescents (M)	SMT in the introduction of the programme	Create job opportunities for young people
Create specialised tourist guide courses (S)	SESC and SMT in the creation of the courses	Prepare tour guides whose environmental conscience will contribute to the preservation of the environment and well-informed explanations will increase tourist satisfaction

\*Key: (S) short term; (M) medium term; (L) long term  
Source: Authors.

The Tourism Product Plan is comprised of two types of actions: urbanistic (Table 5) and structural,

associated with the different types of tourism that could be developed (Table 6).

**Table 5: Urbanistic measures**

Action *	Agent(s) Involved	Objective
Improve tourism signposting (S)*	SMT	Facilitate access and rationalise flows
Renovate the Tourist Reception Centre (S)	SMT	Improve tourist information provision
Set up an efficient tourism-oriented public transport system in the municipality (S/M)	Collaboration agreement for reinforcing the sector between Municipal Council and DETRAN	Provide tourists with easy access to attractions through innovate, comfortable and reasonably priced transport systems, in order to encourage the diversification of demand
Revitalise the urban centre by widening pavements, resurfacing streets and lining them with trees (M)	SMOP	Improve environmental quality and visually enhance the built-up area of the destination
Create new urban parks and regulate their use (M)	SMA and SMT	Enhance and make better use of natural resources, promote tourist activities and increase the range of products available
Draw up a Tourism Use Plan for the urban centre (M)	SMT with support from the university and the tourism industry	Guarantee more suitable resource use and upgrade the tourism environment
Install a system of selective rubbish collection and increase the number of employees (S)	SMOP	Minimise the impacts generated by mass demand
Install tourist support infrastructures (S / M).	SMOP	Eliminate the deficit of public fountains, toilets and public telephones
Construct a new coach and bus station (S)	The Municipal Council should negotiate a State grant to finance construction	Provide logistic support for regional tourism demand
Complete construction work on the airport (S)	The Municipal Council should negotiate the provision of funding and homologation by the State and National Government	Facilitate access for long-haul visitors
Construct a large Conference Centre (M)	The Municipal Council should negotiate the provision of funding by the State and National Governments and supervise construction	Increase capacity for organising congresses and conferences
Install strategically-placed tourist information points that can be consulted around the clock (S)	SMOP and SMT	Facilitate tourism information provision

\*Key: (S) short term; (M) medium term; (L) long term

Source: Authors.

**Table 6: Product specific structural measures**

Type of Product	Action*	Agent(s) Involved	Objective
<b>Tourism in general</b>	Publish a tourist guide book and map (S)*	SMT with support from the private sector	Promote the region and improve visitors' experiences
<b>Health and Wellness</b>	Encourage the establishment of health and esthetic treatment centres (M)	Tourism entrepreneurs	Widen the range of tourism products, using the basic resource
	Regulate the professional field of health and esthetics through a code of rules and inspections (M)	SMS	Guarantee the reliability and quality of the product
<b>Ecotourism</b>	Draw up a Tourism Use Plan for PESCAN, comprising sustainable tourism activities (M)	Competent professionals contracted by Municipal Council in collaboration with State Government	Make use of PESCAN through active conservation measures
<b>Rural</b>	Design and set up a rural tourist attraction circuit (M)	SMT in collaboration with the rural population	Widen the range of tourism products
	Set up programmes to encourage the development of rural tourism in collaboration with the rural population (L)	SMT in collaboration with the Municipal Prefecture	Diversify the rural economy
	Set up an Agricultural Museum (M)	Tourism entrepreneurs	Widen the range of tourism products
<b>Sport</b>	Encourage participation in sport through sports programmes and promotion (M)	SMT together with the corresponding sport associations	Respond to a latent demand already identified and make use of natural resources with tourism potential
<b>Aquatic Activities</b>	Draw up and implement a Tourism Use Plan for <i>Lago Corumbá</i> (M)	SMT in collaboration with tourism entrepreneurs	Widen the range of tourism products
<b>Cultural</b>	Recover the historic and cultural heritage (M/L)	SMC for both implementation and coordination	Recover local heritage and culture
	Design cultural itineraries and a shopping circuit (M)	SMT in collaboration with the commercial sector	Widen the range of tourism products
<b>Events</b>	Develop and implement an event calendar (M)	SMT and AGETUR	Maintain tourism demand constantly throughout the year
	Organise and promote festivals and competitions and acquire financial support for them (M)	Municipal Council and commercial entities linked to the tourism sector	Create new leisure activities and attractions for the local population and promote regional exchange

\*Key: (S) short term; (M) medium term; (L) long term  
Source: Authors.

The purpose of the Promotion Plan is to identify marketing and commercialising measures adapted to the new circumstances. The current image of the Caldas Novas project is one of a stereotype in which the existing commercialising mechanisms follow a

fixed pattern devoid of flexibility and imagination. As a result, it is imperative to introduce novel initiatives to reach new market segments and generate alternative types of demand (Table 7).

**Table 7: Promotional and Commercialisation measures**

Action*	Agent(s) Involved	Objective
Undertake an awareness programme among the local population to promote a positive and friendly attitude towards tourists (S/M/L)*	SMT and tourism sector agents	Improve attention to tourists
Produce high quality promotional materials (S)	SMT and local tourism entrepreneurs, with assessment from SEBRAE and AGETUR (for production and diffusion)	Increase tourism flows and diversify the type of demand
Undertake a nation-wide publicity campaign to acquire recognition of all the products and potential in the municipality (M/L)	SMT and local tourism entrepreneurs, with assessment from SEBRAE and AGETUR and a specialized company contracted <i>ad hoc</i>	Increase tourism flows and diversify the type of demand

\*Key: (S) short term; (M) medium term; (L) long term  
Source: Authors.

The operational calendar (Table 8) pinpoints the key short-term needs: the creation of a solid institutional base for tourism; and the provision of major infrastructures that are essential to upgrade the current tourism system. Human resource training and urban improvement are identified

as medium-term objectives. The strengthening of the system's base is a pre-requisite for the future development of new products, so these consequently will only be feasible in the long-term. This table can therefore be considered a summary of the entire strategic plan.

**Table 8: Calendar for implementing the key actions proposed**

		Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Action	Institutional	Economic and tourism development fund CMT Land Use Plan		
	Training		Tourism skill improvement seminars Labour force training	
	Urban structure	Tourist signposting Major infrastructures (airport and bus terminal)	Urban downtown enhancement (tree planting) Pavement repairs and extension (beyond centre)	Urban cohesion improvements
	Leisure activities	Caldas Novas street plan and tourist Guide	PESCAN tourism use Plan Lago Corumbá tourism use Plan	Rural tourism development
	Promotion			Publicity campaign

Source: Authors.

## 5. Conclusion

Tourism planning guarantees the control of physical and social impacts and reduces the danger of continuous tourism development which can lead to the destination's eventual saturation and even decline as Butler (1980) recognised so long ago. Moreover, it is also clear that the implication of the political powers, the local community and tourism entrepreneurs is the starting point to approach a planning process with hopes of success. At present there is an evident trend towards tourism expansion based on the exploitation of natural resources and the consolidation of policies to achieve this end.

At the same time, it must be remembered that the long-term survival of the human race depends on the wise use of natural resources, so their use must be carefully planned to avoid abuse. These factors situate environmental preservation as one of the major challenges facing tourism development policies in the country, together with quality issues. In many cases, the implementation of proposals encounters difficulties as a consequence of the lack of an appropriate and clearly defined framework adapted to the specific vocation of the territory. Hence it is absolutely essential to bear in mind the idiosyncrasies of the area and the characteristics of each resource in order to ensure sustainable forms of tourism activity.

Until now, the tourism planning process has, to all accounts, followed an impulsivist approach, whereby centralized planning has predominated, offering no opportunities for the destination community to manifest its preferences or exercise even minimum control over development. However, academic discourse on tourism planning is moving towards the need to incorporate social and environmental issues in the economic considerations that are the base of tourism development. As a result, this new proposal has taken a physical approach –placing priority on environmental sustainability- as the starting point, adding to this a social approach, through which the role of the local community is reinforced. The inclusion of temporal considerations –past, present and future- also provides a clearer view of the possibilities, while the classification of strategies into two categories –sectorial and territorial aspects- makes the application of measures more feasible. The authors consider that, without doubt, this procedure is much more likely to meet with success than less comprehensive methods applied in the past.

### Abbreviations used in the text

**AGETUR:** Agencia Goiana do Turismo (Goias state agency for tourism planning and management)

- CMT:** Conselho Municipal do Turismo (municipal council of representatives of all tourism sectors, including hotels, restaurants, guides, university ...)
- DETRAN:** Departamento Nacional do Transito (Goias state department for planning and management of roads and main urban highways)
- FAT:** Fundo de Apoio ao Trabalhador (National government fund that finances short and medium length training courses for workers)
- PESCAN:** Parque Estadual da Serra de Caldas (Goias state park)
- SEBRAE:** Serviço Nacional de Apoio às Micro e Pequena Empresa (National organism for promoting and assisting private enterprises through training programs and financial aid for small companies)
- SESC:** Serviço Social do Comercio (National organism for promoting training programmes in the service sector)
- SM:** Secretaria Municipal (Goias state organism for planning and mangement with a delegation in all municipalities)
- SMA:** Secretaria Municipal do Meio Ambiente (for the environment)
- SMC:** Secretaria Municipal de Cultura (for socio-cultural services)
- SME:** Secretaria Municipal de Educação (for education)
- SMS:** Secretaria Municipal de Saúde (for the health service)
- SMT:** Secretaria Municipal de Turismo (for tourism)
- SMOP:** Secretaria Municipal de Obras Públicas (public works)

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## Notas

- <sup>1</sup> Obviously this stage will not be examined in the case study due to temporal limitations.
- <sup>2</sup> Names of organisms are abbreviated in all the tables and a glossary is included at the end of the text.

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