

## Investigating stakeholders' perspectives about local development and business strategies, by Castellani, Valentina and Sala, Serenella

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### ABSTRACT

#### Investigating stakeholders' perspectives about local development and business strategies

Stakeholders play a relevant role in determining the success of the actions for local development: without the involvement of local actors it is very challenging to obtain significant results. The involvement of stakeholders enables decision makers to identify priorities of action for relevant actors and to identify existing gaps between offer and demand, which is a crucial point for improving competitiveness of local enterprises. Moreover, the involvement of stakeholders in the definition of an action plan for local development can help to enhance the involvement of private sector also in the phase of implementation, assuring cooperation and a better sharing of responsibilities between public and private actors. The presented case study refers to the implementation of a participated planning process (The European Charter for Sustainable Development in Protected Areas) in a tourist destination. To investigate priorities and expectations of local stakeholders, the researchers performed questionnaires interviews, submitted to: tourism operators, tourists and local residents. The aim of the research was twofold: firstly, to identify attitudes and expectations about the development of tourism activities in the area; secondly, to highlight priorities of each category of stakeholder and verify if there was a correspondence between the targets of tourist offer and tourist demand. The results of the questionnaires constitute a part of a wider evaluation of the tourism market in the area, composed by a three-stage analysis: objective analysis, subjective analysis (questionnaires, one-to-one interviews and development of a common vision for the future according to EASW method) and strategic analysis. The three levels of analysis were integrated to support the definition of a participated strategy for sustainable tourism development, that has to be implemented both by public and private actors. The investigation about stakeholders' perspective helped to identify the gaps that exist between offer and demand in the tourism sector and to identify possible areas of intervention to enhance the quality of local tourism activities and to improve the competitiveness of the offer and the quality of the tourist experience in the destination considered.