ABSTRACT
Urban upgrading, new functions for refurbished buildings and environment salvaging can be winning strategies for the creation of a low cost, new kind of tourism in a Region like Hainan, China. Tourism would be considered of a new type for two reasons: the island could open to the incoming of international tourism and of a sustainable kind of tourism. In fact, considering the low and competitive prices China still holds towards the Eastern market, the refurbishing of old buildings with the related creation of new functions as: interactive museums, green areas and centers, hotels, tourist information points and services, commercial areas, could give high quality standards with a goal of a Total Leisure Experience at lower prices for the same offer. In particular, the tropical island of Hainan can be considered a land with a tourist vocation, holiday resort for many chinese visitors, that seems, in the last years, directed towards an international tourism incoming.

The paper presents the case of Wuzhishan city, located in the center of the island, as a pilot study for a wide range strategy of sustainable tourism promotion and development.

“1. INTRODUCTION”
In times of price wars, a tourism market to take under consideration is, for sure, the Chinese one. In fact, in the last years Chinese market is growing every year in number of overseas visitors. The tourism industry was among the earliest opened to the outside world and has been enjoying the highest level of opening up. With good investment and environment development, it is also an advantageous field designated by the government for foreign investment. Experts attributed the continued growth to the country's stable, safe situation and government's supportive policies including new visa policies, which permitted foreigners to visit Shanghai for up to two days or South China's Hainan Province for up to 15 days without Chinese visas. The fact that accessibility to China has been improved and visa facilitation policy implemented has directly increased the inbound tourist flow. 145 big- and medium-sized airports with Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou as hubs and 100 other branch airports in the Western Region were upgraded, enlarged or rebuilt. There was also a large increase in the number of port cities, which greatly improved the accessibility of the country. In Shanghai, 48-hour visa-free transit, in Hainan, 15-day visa-free visit and in the Pearl River Delta 144-hour visa facilitation were adopted. Besides, in the 22 port cities [of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Dalian, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Xi'an, Guilin, Hangzhou, Kunming, Guangzhou (Baiyun), Shenzhen (Luohu, Shekou), Zhuhai (Gongbei), Haikou, Sanya, Jinan, Qingdao, Yantai, Weihai, Chengdu and Nanjing], foreign tour groups are now able to obtain on-the-spot visas. All the above measures created favorable conditions to accommodate tourist increases.
China’s enterprises in the tourism sector as in other sectors, are growing as well and it has to be considered that Chinese enterprises' advantages lie in low cost. To win the competition, they must exert the advantage to the utmost. The advantages are: the production factors are of low cost, the excessive labours in rural area make the labour force very cheap, and the cost of high quality labour in mega enterprises is much lower than that of abroad. In addition, other factors such as land, offices are of low cost, and transaction and production costs are low due to public administrations interventions. In the case of a multinational company, this has to pay extra cost to establish customer relations, and get familiar with market in a brand new market. Sometimes it will have to rethink the management of brand, design of products and packing.

In China there is also a low research cost for latecomers' advantages. Imitating and studying are major method for Chinese enterprises to gain competence. In fact, in the future the mega enterprises of China will shift from cost-priority strategy to the product-difference strategy as a trend of development, this represents the fact that competence enters a new stage.

This cost-priority strategy caused pollution and environmental damage, while, in the last few years, Chinese policies changed; in fact the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), clearly forwarded the guideline of "combining tourism resource development with eco-environment protection", in the Eighth and Ninth Five-Year Plan Period of 1991-1995 and 1996-2000. The Tenth Five-Year Plan of China's Tourism Development and the Outline of the Vision for 2015 and 2020" compiled by CNTA draws the plan for the sustainable development of the tourism industry. The tourist scenic areas are undergoing overall improvement of environmental quality for which CNTA worked out and implemented the "Standards for Evaluating Tourist Scenic Areas (Spots)". During the Tenth Five-Year Plan Period of 2001 to 2005, China is energetically promoting sustainable tourism development.

In particular, this paper will consider tourism in the Hainan Province. Hainan is a tropical island situated in the south end of China in the South China Sea, it occupies an area of 35,000 square kilometres, it’s a multinational Region considering the presence of different ethnic groups as Han, Li, Miao, Hui and other minority nationalities. Hainan Island has monsoon tropical climate with annual average temperature 22°c-26°c and annual rainfall of 1500-2000mm. More than 300 days a year are sunny and that’s why Hainan is a good place for escaping cold, relieving summer heat, having holidays and travelling. Its capital city is Haikou, situated in the northern part of the island, other cities are Sanya (Fig.1) and Wuzhishan (Fig.2).

Fig. 1                                                                              Fig.2

“2. THE CHINESE CASE OF WUZHISHAN”

Wuzhishan is located in the central part of the Hainan Island. The island’s features are the typical tropical regions ones as: crystal water sea with coral reef, long sandy beaches with coconut trees, rich tropical vegetation (Fig.3). The strongest tourism attractors are, at the moment, the coastal city of Sanya, the rain forest and green areas outside the cities.
Wuzhishan was, in the past, a place to stop while travelling from the coast to the inner areas to visit, for example, the Butterfly Valley or the WuzhiMountain rain forest (Fig.4).

When the new road was built, it was a ring that went around the city of Wuzhishan which was completely abandoned by tourists and by the population that migrated towards the coastal area causing an economical decay (Fig.5).

“2.1: The EUTOU project”

A pilot study for rehabilitation and tourism promotion, called EUTOU, was implemented for the town of Wuzhishan. The project aims to devise, test and implement a transferable methodology to improve the decayed urban Nanshan River waterfront at Wuzhishan City, Hainan Province, Peoples Republic of China, using tourism as a catalyst for regeneration.
The Environmental Upgrading through TOUrism Project is a two-year cooperation project co-funded by the European Union under the Asia Urbis Program, which involves partners from Europe, as Provincia di Avellino (Italy) and Cheshire County Council (United Kingdom) and the Hainan Provincial Tourism Administration of Hainan Province, China. Through technical co-operation between partners and close consultation with the Wuzhishan Municipal Government, the EUTOU project, aims to prepare an Urban Tourism Action Plan that will: upgrade the environment, stimulate environmentally sustainable tourism and create an effective consultation and implementation framework for carrying out the plan over a ten-year period.

The overall aim of the EUTOU project is to create a methodology to improve the environment through tourism; a methodology that, if successful, can be replicated in other parts of China where similar conditions, needs and challenges are found.

The EUTOU project found its place in a wider development project started by the l’HPTA (Hainan Provinicial Tourism Administration) with the aim of improving the social and economical situation in Wuzhishan. In 2002, the Tourism Master Plan for the Hainan Province, drawn up by the World Tourism Organization and the HPTA, considered Wuzhishan city as the center for a new Cultural Tourism for the presence of the ethnic minorities of Li and Miao.

Wuzhishan presents also interesting features in comparison with the bigger cities of the island: it’s a small town surrounded by a natural context of relevant interest with a very rich tropical vegetation; the distinction between city and countryside is still existent, very rare feature in China, where cities are growing and developing, more and more, as the Eastern model.

The Wuzhishan City study case can be considered of great interest as the Public Corporations, are developing policies to create for it a competitive role in the international tourism market.

“3. UPGRADING OF TOURIST PRODUCTS”

To open up to an international tourism market in time of price wars, the island of Hainan and Wuzhishan in particular, has to understand the needs of the foreign tourism market segments keeping its peculiarities.

To upgrade tourist products we have to consider: the strengths and weaknesses of existing or potential tourist products; the opportunities for developing tourism in the city and the identification of potential tourism market segments.

The strengths and the weakness points of Wuzhishan should firstly be viewed in the context of the whole island and could be summarized in a chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographically close to Asian markets</td>
<td>No clear image of Hainan for long-haul market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive and relatively undeveloped tropical natural areas</td>
<td>Little English spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good transport infrastructure</td>
<td>Services limited for Free Indipendent Travellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality resorts on the coast</td>
<td>Few direct international flights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable prices</td>
<td>Remote areas deficient in quality accommodation and interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good appeal and well-known destination domestically</td>
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<td>Safe destination free of terrorism</td>
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As far as the strengths are concerned, Wuzhishan is the capital of the Li ethnic minority, a distinctive culture with particular tribes’ dresses, dance, architecture, gastronomy, handicrafts and history. The setting of the city on the Nanshan River and surrounded by hills provides an attractive setting to display the Li culture. The surroundings with tropical forests, rivers, rice fields and villages provides also a very interesting attraction for both domestic and international tourist flows, that can be linked with the visit to the famous “Wuzhi Mountain” or “Five Fingers Mountain”, known throughout China. The weaknesses can be related to the lack of an imaginative and quality representation of the Li culture in town and to the degraded and generally uninteresting state of the Nanshan river waterfront. The opportunities can be seen in the improvements in road infrastructure that made Wuzhishan more accessible; these developments could allow day trips to Sanya or possible combination holidays between the island’s resorts and Wuzhishan. Also important are recent Government initiatives to regulate the flow of the Nanshan River, through the construction of a dam and a program to improve the water quality.

To form a marketing strategy it is also necessary to understand the type of tourists that could be attracted in Wuzhishan and this can be done through the understanding of the nature of the customers groups and their main needs and tendencies. Customer groups can be subdivided in: domestic tourist flows, regional tourist flows and international tourist flows. The first two groups are present in Hainan already, while the international flow is still to increase perhaps through eco/cultural tourist packages for Li culture/rainforest tours, island tours, specialist health and wellness and specialist sports itineraries.

As far as the preference and needs are concerned, each group has different types; the domestic market is focused on tour groups and has needs of: diversion, to feature activities with a high emotional rate and low physical commitment, fun, health and wellness, food and shopping.

The regional tourist market is growing in sophistication and includes, today, ecotourism and cultural tourism segments.

The international long-haul market is, for sure, part of a specialist segment and would be attracted to Wuzhishan for a quality promotion and cultural and ecotourism products. This visitor has a desire to visit places thoroughly relying on quality experiences rather than variety; has a need to socialize with local population; to experience products and services that are authentic rather than manufactured and representative of the history and traditions of the visited place; desire to travel with low environmental and social impact (ecotourism); health and wellness based on traditional practices and good quality resorts/hotels or basic traditional accommodation.

Wuzhishan could be a special ecotourism and cultural destination by developing a range of top quality attractions and accommodation: the town would act as a base for eco/cultural tourists by providing awareness and interpretation of surrounding natural and cultural attractions.

“4. STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM PROMOTION AND LAND ENHANCEMENT”

“4.1. Environmental protection”

Environmental protection is one of the policies the HPTA (Hainan Province Tourism Administration), should pursue to promote tourism in the island. In fact, to protect the environment means to eliminate or reduce natural and anthropic risk, to enhance land’s potentialities, to save money in the long term-period and to attract a different kind of tourism.

The so called eco-tourism, is a type of tourism compatible with the environment that chooses different activities from the mass-tourism. This type of tourist prefers pristine landscapes, natural attractions, wellness, sports, traditional folk and handicrafts (Fig.6), food traditions (Fig.7) and traditional but comfortable hotels.
To better understand the needs and the kind of facilities that are linked to eco-cultural tourism development, WTO, in the frame of the First World Summit of Eco-tourism held in Quebec City, Canada, in 2002, defined a profile of tourist’s demands:

- no mass tourism destinations, no standard offers, no seasonality
- search for new destinations, original and typical products
- search for destinations that present high quality and a wide offer of facilities
- responsible tourism
- search for local culture
- search for authentic daily life experience with local communities
- satisfaction of emotional needs

Hainan island is a well known tourist destination both for national market and Asian one. As targeted on 25 Years Plan it is one of the seven major regions where tourism development is given priority, designed as a tropical island holiday resort and where natural beauty is the main attraction. Naturally, ecotourism has costs and benefits while it’s growing in many parts of the world, and is mostly on public lands. It’s not very easy to evaluate benefits and costs of ecotourism, and these may vary over space and over time. As the numbers of tourists grow, so does the interest in seeing new places and seeking new experiences, and some of these locations show how tourism can have negative impacts. For the costs, poorly planned and managed ecotourism may damage the same wildlife, natural or cultural resources that draw the tourists. However, there are benefits (Boo 1992) like:

1. increased funding for protected areas and local communities (protected areas suffer from budget constraints, yet collect nominal entrance fees or none at all; but travellers are interested in helping the areas, as they become more environmentally conscious)
2. job creation for local residents (e.g., tour guides, park wardens, lodge owners, crafts makers, etc.)
3. environmental education for visitors (increasing awareness can change behaviour, change use patterns, and create advocates for conservation).

So, to switch from mass tourism to sustainable tourism and from indistinctive tourist facilities to an attractive stay some strategies and policies should be realized; as strategies we can consider the following:
• create a tourist district
• create a wide offer of facilities
• create a typical, high quality offer
• enhance the emotional meaning of tourism offer
• Leadership in costs strategy

As policies:

• Protect natural beauties and cultural heritage
• Catch pioneer tourism flows
• Integrated control of tourism offer quality in terms of sustainability
• Involve local communities in an integrated program of training and territorial activities
• Enhance originality of tourism offer

The suggested strategy’s goal is to obtain the total leisure experience by creating a high emotional contents tourism offer that features attractiveness for all tourism typologies. Key element for this strategy is the capability to recall events, myths, legends; give life to ruins, rocks and trees, creating, for each visitor, emotions connected to an immaterial experience.

In old times it was seen as the carrying out of a low price strategy that weighed upon the offered services’ quality. In present days it’s just a strategy that moves visitors away from destinations that present similar tourist services but are well-known in the international or in the promotional market.

“4. 2. Reuse of buildings for tourism functions”

The proposal to study the relationships between existing buildings and new tourist functions is part of a project for a tourist development based on economic and environmental sustainable solutions. This is a cultural approach that intends the territory – with the environmental and built components – as a resource that must be defended for a sustainable development.

The changes of functions in the building is a diffuse practice in history. In fact in the past a building could change function in its cycle-life, often in accordance with the new requirements of the society. The existing buildings can represent built resources and economic resources: the reuse of buildings, or parts of buildings that aren’t used, permits to limitate the costs of intervention. In fact, to reuse existing buildings for new functions means to use already available built resources.

Besides the choices of new uses for existing buildings is founded on the major economic convenience, in some cases the reuse is an indispensable tool to carry out sustainable development policies. An adequate intervention of reuse can give a new “vocation” to the area around the building because the new functions can give a new role to the area in the urban system: in the Wuzhishan case, the choice of tourist functions for existing buildings represents a strategy to diffuse tourism services in the centre of the city and to give a tourist and cultural role to this area.

Besides tourist activities can generate social and economic dynamics in the area. So, tourism contributes to satisfy local needs, for the economic advantages that derive from the tourist activities and for the flux of visitors in the area.

Also the open-spaces near the building can be used for tourism activities connected with the functions of the building.

This strategy of reuse for tourist activities can reduce the investments and permits to offer low cost services.

The proposal for the project of new tourist activities in Wuzhishan city started from the identification of the existing tourist functions in the city in order to understand what kind of new activities were necessary to insert and where to locate them to integrate the existing those.

So the project identified new tourist activities in order to increase the “tourist vocation” of Wuzhishan city.
The new functions are:

- Tourist facilities
- Info-points
- Restaurants, café
- Internet-café
- Hotels
- Permanent and temporary exhibition areas
- Green area interpretation centre
- Open area for Typical Products Display and Sale

In fact, the location of the promotion functions in the city has an important role to solve the problem of tourist marketing strategy. For example, the info-points must be positioned in strategic areas in order to:

- offer information to the tourists when they arrive and when the walk around the city
- help them to get to know the tourist attractions and services of Wuzhishan city and Hainan island.

Instead of demolishing existing buildings in order to build new ones for tourist functions, the proposal has verified if these functions could be located in existing disused buildings. In fact the reuse of these building permits to avoid the demolishments and constructions costs, limiting them to the adjustment of existing structures.

The proposal positions the tourism promotion activities in the urban system, identifies strategic areas in which to locate these new functions, integrating the existing tourist activities.

The proposed method permits to design the future plan of the tourist services for Wuzhishan city, within a rehabilitation and promotion project of this area.

After the identification of new activities and disused buildings, or parts of buildings, it is necessary to verify, in the general framework of environmental salvaging, the compatibility between functions and buildings in order to limitate the costs of the interventions.

It is important to verify:

1. compatibility between buildings and new tourist activities, especially in terms of dimensions and typology;
2. localisation of the disused buildings in the urban system;
3. relationships between the new tourist functions and the existing functions;
4. relationships between these activities and the urban system.

On the relationships between the touristic activities, it is necessary to verify:

- activities that need to have direct accesses from the street
- activities that don’t need to have direct accesses from the street
- activities that need to be connected
- activities that don’t need to be connected
- activities that can be “preferably” connected
- activities that need to have independent accesses
- activities that don’t need to have independent accesses.

It is important also to verify the existence of open areas that can be used for promotion activities; when these spaces are near a building for tourism functions, it’s interesting to verify the possibility to use the open area for activities connected with the promotion functions existent in the building.

For example, in Wuzhishan city the exhibition and all the related activities of the museum could be displayed in the courtyard. (Fig.8)
After the analysis of the requirements of the new tourist functions, it is possible to verify if these activities can be aggregated and where they can be located, designing the new functions layouts.

“5. THE PILOT STUDY: THE INTERPRETATION CENTRE OF THE PARK”

The EUTOU project of rehabilitation and promotion of Wuzhishan city includes two green areas near the centre of the city.
The eastern green area (Fig.9) will become a Urban Park with typical trees and plants of a tropical area. The project also includes a centre in this park in order to inform tourists before they visit the park.
This centre will represent the access to the park and an interpretation centre of the vegetation existent in the green area. In particular, the activities of the centre will be:

- Environmental Education Centre
- Green Area’s Interpretation Centre
- Permanent and Temporary Exhibitions
- Info-point
- Relax Area
- Cafè.

These activities are very important especially in an area characterized by an interesting environmental heritage because they can draw an international eco-tourism in Wuzhishan and diffuse an environmental education.
Actually there is an old neglected factory, togheter with other buildings that will be demolished, at the access of the Green Area (Fig.10).
Since this is the only example of industrial archeology in the centre of Wuzhishan, with a typological and costructive identity in a contex with few traces of the past, it would be interesting to not demolish this particular building.
The proposal to use this factory building for the activities connected with the Park is founded on some important evaluations:
- la localizzazione della struttura presso il Verde è adeguata per le attività informative, educative e espositive perché, in questo modo, è possibile informare i visitatori prima di accedere all'area verde;
- le dimensioni spaziali della struttura consentono l'uso per un gran numero di attività;
- la tipologia spaziale aperta di quest'edificio fornisce a tale costruzione un elevato livello di flessibilità spaziale; tale caratteristica consente l'uso dell'edificio per diverse finalità contemporaneamente, come esposizioni, informazione, educativo e relax;
- la localizzazione di queste attività in un unico edificio consente di connetterle e creare un percorso per i visitatori attraverso il parco informazioni, esposizioni, formazione e relax;
- la morfologia dell'edificio, con una bassa altezza, ha un impatto ambientale limitato.

Queste considerazioni mostrano la possibilità di utilizzare tale fabbrica per i nuovi funzioni connesse con l'area verde (Fig. 11). In effetti, le caratteristiche dell'edificio sono compatibili con le richieste delle nuove attività, ovviamente con la necessità di recupero e adattamento.

Quindi, la proposta è considerata interessante la ipotesi di recuperare questo vecchio stabilimento piuttosto che demolirlo e costruire un altro nuovo edificio; infatti, l'uso del fabbricato esistente consente di limitare i costi dell'intervento, evitando i costi della demolizione e ricostruzione.

L'importanza di tale ipotesi è maggiore perché questa intervento di recupero e riutilizzo non è un caso singolo, ma uno degli schemi di un progetto di reintegrazione ambientale e urbana, basato sulla sostenibilità economica e ambientale e compatibilità.
Environmental protection and reuse of buildings represent actions aimed at the development of a tourist marketing that, at the same time, protects land’s features. This approach allows to obtain better results reducing environmental and economic costs. The integration strategy between economic and environmental sustainability and compatibility is given by this pilot study to assure the enhancement of the island’s territory through the correct use of environmental and built heritage, the environmental education and the promotion of ecotourism. Ecotourism can contribute to both profitability and conservation efforts, if planned and managed with the care and commitment that is required by the visitors, the host communities and the natural and cultural resources.

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