

例会要旨

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The French Mountain Tourism Facing the New Challenges

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French mountain sport tourism is concentrated in Alpine territory and mainly in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. It is recognized as the first to second world mountain destination according to the seasons. The territory is equipped with high quality amenities and infrastructures, and characterized by know-how and advanced industries. These assets enable their actors to create an integrated competitive and global market. The variety of the supply, the actors' skills and the different origins of its clientele (international, national, regional) allow the multiplication of the interactions transcending its different sectors (services, technology, infrastructures, personal equipment, training, etc.). The French mountain sport tourism undeniably has the characteristics, on the one hand of a world-class economic ecosystem thanks to its excellence, attractivity and exporting industries, and on the other hand, of a social ecosystem because of the dependence of its industries on socio-economic actors and on the role of its economic activities in the social life of the territory.

For these reasons, it is a matter of a social and economic ecosystem which is specific to the Alpine territory, so not relocatable. It combines sport, tourism and mountains which indisputably constitute a major socio-economic issue weighing 20 billion in consumption, for the first region of mountain in Europe.

Key figures

- € 244 billion Regional GDP (2018)
- 2nd richest region in France (after great-Paris) and 6th richest economic European region
- 1st mountain region in Europe in terms of size, with 53.8 million ski days
- 1st ski area in Europe in terms of size and more than 170 ski resorts
- Mountains are 80% of the regional territory
- € 11 billion Regional tourism turnover, 130,000 jobs
- € 20 billion Regional Tourism Consumption, 8% of regional GDP
- The French Ski School is the largest one in the world, it covers 85% of the ski lessons market in France with more than 17, 000 instructors

The French mountain tourism development is based on political, social and economic reasons.

- Since the 1950s' French national and regional policies are supportive for touristic infrastructures development (roads, transports, ski resorts, ski schools, etc.)
- National legislation is favorable to vacation, tourism and leisure practices (5 weeks holidays for all).
- School vacations' organization is based on close cooperation between tourism industries and the Ministry of Education
- Social importance of tourism practices (over 60% of French people travel for vacation at least once a year).
- Social importance of sport practices (Over 66% of French people practice sport activity regularly).
- Economic importance of tourism industries constitute € 157 billions of consumption (over 7% of national GDP).
- Sport economic weight represents € 40 billion (2% of national GDP).

In the same time, French mountainous areas are facing major changes in a globalized world, where climate change, societal evolutions and digital technologies growth. This situation requires from its players to take on these new challenges. Winter sports and mountain tourism are no exception to these trends and call adaptive and innovative collective responses.

Thus, in the light of ecosystem perspective, public authorities, private companies, ski resorts, consumers, institutions and territories should collaborate to face the new challenges. They have to adapt their supply, strategies, organizations, behaviors and business models to remain competitive and attractive in sustainable world. Otherwise, the risk relating to these major changes and their negative socioeconomic impacts (insecurity, inequality, loss of employment, etc.) will become larger and menacing.

The adaptation these changing environments raises questions relating to the market's renewal on the both sides; clientele and products. Also, researchers should approach differently these issues in this new context of major changes, they have to consider the new needs of societies, individuals, and businesses through an international cooperation and multidisciplinary frameworks.