Umbria turns to data and artificial intelligence to guide its tourism strategy. Meloni: “A compass for managing visitor flows and building more balanced and competitive tourism”

The aim is simple: to put technology at the service of public decision-making. That means bringing together data that currently comes from a range of different sources, in order to understand who comes to Umbria, when they come, where they go, what they are looking for and which experiences they choose. A deeper understanding of demand makes it possible to plan tourism policy more effectively and to direct promotional resources towards the areas with the most room to grow.

With this approach in mind, the Umbria Region has developed a data intelligence platform that can analyse and cross-reference the data generated by the regional tourism system, from physical visitor flows to digital interactions. Built with public oversight, transparency and respect for privacy, the tool gives a clearer picture of visitor profiles and behaviour, measures the effects of the policies in place and, above all, allows strategies to be adjusted and updated in the light of the evidence.

“Today’s challenge is not just about attracting more visitors, but about managing tourism growth better and increasing the value it brings to local areas,” says Simona Meloni, Umbria’s Regional Councillor for Tourism. “To do that, we need an ever better understanding of demand, and we need to use data as a compass for our decisions. Artificial intelligence and data intelligence are no substitute for policy-making: they help us make it better informed and more effective. We want to understand where there is room for growth, spread visitor flows more widely across the region and throughout the year, and align promotion with each area’s ability to offer visitors what they are looking for. It is a crucial step for an Umbria that wants to grow in national and international markets without losing its balance, while making the most of its historic villages, remote rural areas and local supply chains.”

The digital data analysed by the Region sheds light on two complementary areas: demand and supply. On the demand side, user interactions with the regional tourism portal, from searches and browsing paths to the offers viewed and the time spent on each page, reveal the real interests of potential visitors through their behaviour. This makes it possible to understand not only “who comes”, but also “what they are looking for” and, above all, “what they cannot find”. On the supply side, the regional portal brings together the offers of around 2,300 active operators, including accommodation providers, experiences and services. The way these offers are viewed is also a valuable source of information: which ones are looked at, which are explored in more depth, and which generate interest or enquiries. All of this shows whether supply is actually meeting market demand. If a particular type of experience is searched for frequently but generates few conversions, for example, the data suggests that the problem may lie not with demand but with the quality, structure or presentation of the offer.

Simona Meloni
Via Mario Angeloni, 61 - 06124 Perugia
Telephone: 075 504 5586
Certified email: regione.giunta@postacert.umbria.it

Matching supply and demand therefore becomes a tool for steering tourism policy. The platform does more than take a snapshot of visitor flows: it measures the quality of the relationship between the region and its visitors, distinguishing, for example, between an offer that people look for but cannot find and one that they find but do not choose. The real added value of data intelligence lies in its ability to read physical flows and digital behaviour together. The former show where and when people arrive; the latter help to explain what they were looking for before they arrived and what they found, or did not find, once they came into contact with what the region has to offer. Combining the two makes it possible to move from a purely descriptive reading of tourism to a diagnostic one that can inform planning. Once processed, visitor flows also stop being mere numbers and become maps of tourism. The platform shows how visitors are distributed in space as well as over time, pinpointing the areas under the greatest pressure and those that still have room to grow. This information helps to guide promotional choices and to use resources in a more targeted way. Knowing where visitors are concentrated helps to identify where action is needed to spread them more widely and, conversely, where the offer needs to be strengthened first so that an area is ready to welcome new demand.

The data intelligence platform thus becomes a genuine “compass for the region”: a tool for consolidating the results achieved, spotting any problems early and guiding future decisions. Data is no longer used simply to produce statistics on arrivals and overnight stays, but becomes an integral part of shaping tourism policy. The first findings are already being put into practice and point towards a clear goal: a more balanced spread of visitors throughout the year and across the whole region.

Alongside the analysis of digital behaviour, the Region also measures visitor flows and the economic value generated by tourism, in both the domestic and the international market. Three priorities have emerged from this analysis. The first is continuous monitoring: data intelligence tools provide ever more up-to-date information on visitor numbers, making it possible to act before any build-up of visitors becomes a problem. The second is extending the season. Data on international markets shows that there is demand for quality experiences outside the traditional peak months too. The challenge, then, is to create products, experiences and travel offers that can capture this demand all year round. The third concerns the development of local areas. Managing visitor flows more carefully can strengthen the role of historic villages, remote rural areas and local supply chains, turning the spread of demand into a driver of development and, in the long term, striking a balance between appeal, sustainability and the quality of the experience.

This is how the Region intends to use data and innovation: not to replace decisions, but to make them better informed. Because understanding tourism better means being able to manage it better, and turning growth in visitor numbers into value that is shared across the whole of Umbria.

Simona Meloni
Via Mario Angeloni, 61 - 06124 Perugia
Telephone: 075 504 5586
Certified email: regione.giunta@postacert.umbria.it

Press & Communications Office, Councillor Simona Meloni
Andrea Luccioli
Mobile: +39 3494968001
Email: aluccioli@regione.umbria.it