

Wine and Food Route as a Collective Mark for Wine Tourism Product: A Sequential Game

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Abstract

The Wine and Food Routes (WFRs) identify socio-territorial entities, which involve many private and public actors. This paper will take into consideration just wineries and local counties. The purpose is to suggest WFR as a collective (trade)mark for wine tourism. This paper is theoretical and the methodology used concerns a game theoretical approach through which a sequential game of adhesion - exit model has been set-up. This work intends to show whether a WFR can be considered as a collective trademark to study the behaviour of the wineries in evaluating to adhere or not to the WFR. The paper will also show that in some cases the adhesion to the WFR can appear to be too rigid for producers influencing in some way the good performance of the WFR itself. Further considerations should be taken regarding the relationship between the local stakeholders when WFR start functioning. The main finding is that the use of a collective trademark for wine tourism entrepreneurs is not always useful. The creation of a collective trademark can be efficient or not as well as the non creation of the mark. Its use can stimulate entrepreneurs to improve the quality of their goods and thus foster competition. The implications concern the fact that alliances among local players acting within WFR can generate improved quality of services, enhanced visibility and cross-marketing activities with other members and the involvement in local events. Furthermore, a strong relationship between entrepreneurs and public institutions in the short run should be a way to reinforce entrepreneurial co-operation and encourage further business development in the long run. The originality of this work regards the use of a game theoretical approach within the wine tourism sector.

Keywords: Wine tourism, wine and food routes, collective trademark, game theory.

1 – Introduction: the Italian Wine and Food Routes

Wine and Food Routes (WFRs) represent a particular future local development within the tourist supply's system. In Italy, Wine and Food Routes (WFRs) widely increased as well as in Europe, North America and Australia (Meyer-Cech, 2003; Hall *et al.*, 2003; Telfer, 2001a; Telfer, 2001b; Telfer and Hashimoto, 2003) confirming that they can be considered as the anchor for wine tourism (Telfer, 2001a). Their importance is due to the fact that they act as a tourism promotional tool (Getz, 2000; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2003). A part of the past studies emphasised the relationship between agriculture and tourism as difficult, complex and conflictual (Telfer and Wall, 1996), today the WFR is certainly a link between them. It attracts tourists' flows in rural context, involving issues concerning the relationship between agricultural development and rural amenities management. Through WFR, tourism promotion focuses on agricultural products and agricultural promotion may influence the regional landscape leading to a growth in tourism (Bowen *et al.*, 1991).

The Italian WFRs are 140 (Asero & Patti, 2009) and involve 3.313 wineries, 1.300 Local Council and 358 DOCs (AOC Appellation of Origin Controlled). They were instituted in the year 1999 through the National law n. 268 that defines them as itineraries created in geographical areas where quality wines are produced. According to the law a wine route aims to exploit the wine growing areas and wineries, including cultural and natural resources, allowing tourists to benefit from this experience. Typical identification of a territory devoted to wine has helped create the various Wine Routes, which also include the typical foods of the district. As a consequence, many of them are now called Wine and Food Routes (WFRs).

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According to the Italian legislative system, each region has a proper law regulating this matter. Some routes are not yet well developed, even though they are instituted in all the regions of the country, therefore not all effectively operative. WFR were created as an instrument to attract tourists to the wine areas selling wine tourism itineraries. The creation of a WFR identifies and supports the local production and the decision of the wineries to be part of such a system (the route). A WFR consists of a designated itinerary, or several itineraries, even defined as a sign-posted itinerary (Brunori and Rossi, 2000), through the wine regions which notes the different vineyards and winemakers and provides information on sites of historical and other interest (Hall *et al.*, 2000).

A WFR contributes both to the development and promotion of regional wine tourism (Marques, 2001) and increasing the reputation and image of wine regions and their wines (Cambourne *et al.*, 2000). A wine and food route associates quality wines as well as different typical foodstuff products, producer businesses and tourist operators under a single brand, identifying short, medium and long itineraries that circulate through the same geographic territory (Asero & Patti, 2009). Moreover, it combines wine with other complementary activities, such as gastronomy, architecture and heritage, mountain biking, sailing, golf, etc. (Cambourne *et al.*, 2000; Dodd 1995; Frochot, 2000). Hence, the WFRs offer to local stakeholders of a wine production area the occasion to enhance a place through its cultural identity in spite of increasing globalization, as result of a process that Ray (1998) has defined a 'cultural economic' approach to territory development.

In Italy, WFRs emerged from a set involving private entrepreneurs and public bodies. The private actors are wineries, restaurants, accommodation facilities, farms and so on, the public actors are the local counties and Regional institutions. Therefore, WFR involves wine makers, wine distributors, wine institutional organisations and several other private bodies connected to the industry and public bodies. Usually, WFRs involve either small and medium sized wineries, managed by local winemakers' families, or big firms.

However, at this moment, there are many criticisms regarding the WFR's organisation and management. Italy has produced a large number of wine routes, but only few of them efficiently run. In this context, it is perhaps a better solution to introduce a collective trademark for a wine tourism product. Each WFR could create its own collective trademark able to encourage entrepreneurs to ameliorate the quality standard of their tourist services and improve their performance.

In that sense, this work intends to show that in some cases the adhesion to the WFR can appear to be too rigid for producers influencing in some way the good performance of the WFR itself. To achieve this goal, the paper presents a sequential game of an adhesion – exit model to study the introduction of the WFR as a trademark and the behaviour of the wineries in evaluating in whether to adhere or not to the WFR.

The outline of the paper is as follows. After this introduction, a paragraph shows a literature review concerning the relationship between public and private actors within the WFR, and a sub-paragraph describes WFR as a trademark. The following explains the methodology used and sets up the model and finally proposes the comments and concluding remarks.

2 – The WFR and the collective (trade) mark

WFRs involve wineries that differ in dimension and interest, but produce goods grounded on local culture and traditional knowledge. It is known that wine represents an experience good and also a cultural good for which its production is indissolubly linked to a territory, to a community and its history. Furthermore, it depends on traditional and tacit knowledge. In this way, wine, as well as wine tourism, become a cultural based production for which the assignment of a collective trademark could be the best practice. A collective trademark could be useful to protect and support wine tourism and to improve quality. Collective trademarks are formal institutions whose efficiency depends on the interaction with the original social and economic environment (OECD, 200) like geographical indications or appellation of origin for the wine production.

Trademarks are symbols, labels, words, and geographical and cultural features, (Howard & Lixin, 2008) Thus, they are the legal form of names that serve as carriers of reputation. In Europe, the creation of additional means such as logos, trademarks, and brand names, only became necessary as economies became increasingly market-based; with increasing competition among local producers, new tools were needed to distinguish products from the same region (Bendekgey & Mead, 1992).

The legal protection afforded to trademarks has long been focused on preventing consumer confusion concerning the link between a trademark and the underlying performance that established the reputation that the mark represents. For the entrepreneurs, a collective trademark serves as marketing tools and to guarantee a quality standard level, for tourists it provides assurances against fraud and information, reduces confusion.

According to Moran (2003), WFR seeks to articulate a set of attributes that endow it with a distinctive trademark or brand identity. WFR should be the means to link trademark and reputation of a local area and its productions.

Hall *et al.*, (2000) argued that WFR represents a “collective trademark” in the sense of a mix of environmental, cultural and social features and confers a distinctive and unique character to each WFR. In some cases, WFR can be characterised by the geographical identity or regional origin of wine formalized through appellation controls. Otherwise, it is clear that wine and tourism relate to regional branding (Hall & Macionis, 1998). WFR usually presents a dynamic image due to a mix of elements, such as rural architecture, social innovation, rural planning, which combine modernity and tradition that is its strongest trademark (Hitters, 2000).

According to Censis (2011) both local policy makers and wine entrepreneurs consider important the role of a territorial trademark: in fact, the 8,9% intends to set-up a collective trademark.

In Italy, the recent debate on WFRs is focused on the role they should assume in a tourist perspective. On the one hand, there are those who consider them capable of selling tourist itineraries, on the other hand, those who think that the wine route has to promote tourism and define its policies.

Actually, a wine route cannot sell tourist products, because it is not a tour operator, its role is to promote tourism in a rural area. In other words, wine and food routes can enhance a collective action at local level, which enables wineries to mobilize social relations to improve their economic performance. A good collective action could be empowered creating a collective trademark, securing to the producer the benefits of the good reputation which is created through excellence and the promotion of higher merchandising standards. In addition, a collective trademark can permit the creation of a distinctive product identifier and the assurance to the tourist of the authenticity of products bearing that identifier.

Clearly, the collective trademark should be useful to emphasize the uniqueness, the distinction of a route and of its products, and to consolidate the prestige and image of the wine region.

Nevertheless, some difficulties could come out from the definition of a collective trademark; therefore, some considerations have to be made to better understand the role of the WFR as a trademark. First of all, the creation of a collective trademark represents a fixed cost, which generally falls on the local public subject. Moreover, the adoption of a collective trademark could not be considered profitable in the same way by all the WFR's wineries: the trademark is always profitable for wine market oriented wineries, but it could not be profitable for the wine tourism market oriented wineries. In addition, WFR's wineries do not all represent the same quality standards because of their interests and preferences.

However, if the wineries do not represent the same quality standards in their offer, a collective trademark is associated to a minimum quality standard. In the case of a tourism product, a minimum quality standard is necessary as a signal able to provide information about the average quality of wineries, offering tourist full board accommodation, using the WFR name as the same label. A local policy maker could decide to choose a low level of quality to cover a maximum number of firms and thus maintain his voting majority. This choice is rational but risks to be inefficient if the trademark loses its reputation.

2.1 - The relationship among local stakeholders within WFR

To better understand if it is possible to consider WFR as a collective (trade)mark, one needs to describe the relationship among the local stakeholders acting within the route. The development of a WFR needs to create an organisational structure which is able to involve both the public and the private sector (Getz, 2000). After all, the multidimensional nature of wine tourism characterises the relationship among several stakeholders in the WFR. The literature has described this relationship by using different concepts. According to Bruwer (2003), it represents a cooperation between the different subjects involved such as regional governments, wineries, wine tourism associations and local councils.

Hall et al., (1997) refer it to a wide range of cooperative behaviour between organisations linked through economic and social relationships and that provide increased economic and social benefits for the local community involved (Novelli et al., 2006).

Other authors stated that WFRs can represent organizations, in terms of networks and alliances between wineries and the local political institutions. Dredge (2006) talks about networks, which “spanning public and private sectors and are increasingly important in shaping tourism planning and development”. Clarke (2005) observed that the networks may assist to foster greater cooperation, drawing together public and private sector interests and to increase visitor spending while minimizing leakage and maximizing the multiplier effect in the local economy.

The WFRs’ networks can provide a wide range of positive externalities, by possibly exploiting the “good neighbours” relationship stimulating cooperation and partnerships between “communities in local and neighbouring regions, which serves as a vehicle for the stimulation of economic development through tourism” (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004). Network externalities’ arise if the benefits enjoyed by any one within the WFR depend positively on the number of users who have compatible products (Lea & Hall, 2004).

Telfer (2001a) explained the relationship among the stakeholders within WFR in terms of alliances. More precisely, studying the wineries in the Niagara Wine Routes, he argued that they are able to quickly take advantage of the benefits of joint marketing and special events created by the more established wineries with more experience in the tourism industry. These alliances stem from agreements among enterprises (Goldhar and Lei, 1991; Bucklin and Sengupta, 1989; Ohmae, 1989; Thorelli, 1986) that intend to share benefits and co-marketing actions.

Moreover, some literature distinguishes between vertical and horizontal alliances, emphasizing that vertical alliances are those between producers and their suppliers or distributors and are focused more on maintaining flexibility and added value. Horizontal alliances are focused on protecting core competencies (Magun, 1996, cited in Telfer, 2001a, pag. 22). For instance, in the case of Niagara Wine Routes, the alliances among the stakeholders have shown over the time a clear improvement of the reputation of Niagara as wine region (Telfer, 2001a, and 2001b).

This kind of alliance, strengthened by the logic of the network, can provide firms with access to knowledge, resources, markets (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005) and can operate as a strategic agreement when the wineries involved enter into a voluntary arrangement of exchanging and sharing information (Gulati, 1998). Moreover, Hall *et al.* (2000) have explored potential linkages within the wine tourism industry; they explored a set of wineries working together under the categories of linkages, organisation sets, action sets and networks.

Furthermore, a WFR could be considered as a collective action at a local level. In that sense, it might be able to build a system of alliances involving environment, institutions, symbols and routines that facilitate the activities of the entrepreneurs by giving them access to resources not accessible through an individual action alone (Brunori & Rossi, 2000). Despite this, in Italy, the relationship between public and private subjects within the WFRs denotes a low level of cooperation between the stakeholders. The limits of the collaboration could be represented mainly by three features: conflicts of competences, low propensity to cooperate, no shared objectives, and lack of coordination and control of activated services (Antonioli Corigliano *et al.*, 2007). Vernon *et al.* (2005) record that “a striking feature of contemporary tourism is the wealth of collaborative initiatives between local authorities, government agencies, businesses and host communities”.

3 – The model: a sequential game of adhesion -exit

The theoretical and empirical works concerning the application of the game theory in the wine tourism economy are limited. Game theory has been viewed as a rational decision process when there are conflict situations. Actually, the game theory structure means that the players are rational and their objective is to maximize utility. A game theory model, therefore, involves a set of decision makers known as the players; the result of a decision made by two players with the decision of at least one other actor represents the outcome; the options available to each player to arrive at a particular outcome: strategy or set of strategies, and a set of payoffs that each player can achieve in every outcome. Strategies and outcomes relate to each other mathematically on the consequences of the strategy choices by all players in the game.

In Italy, the WFR's constitution has been characterised by the impulse coming from regional and local public institutions, which involved wine and tourism entrepreneurs. The paper utilises a theoretical game approach to stylize a rational model of behaviour in order to understand the decision of a policy maker when he introduces a WFR as a collective trademark. The model is a sequential game and investigates WFR institutions' behaviour and the decision of wineries about the adhesion to a WFR collective trademark. Moreover, it represents the wine entrepreneurs as individuals that live within the local area. Therefore, there are N wineries equal to N individuals constituting the local communities and the policy maker that has to decide whether or not to introduce a WFR collective trademark.

The model will take into consideration only two subjects, from now on called players: the privately owned wineries and the local Council. The private owned wineries, represent two categories: wineries that only concerns with the production of wine and wineries that also offer full board accommodation facilities for tourists. Therefore, the former is just wine market oriented (W^{WM}), while the latter is also wine tourism market oriented (W^{WTM}). It should be noted that wine market oriented firms do not consider as tourist content their products, but only care on the wine market result. Thus, for them the adhesion to a WFR collective trademark (WFR' CT) could be representing a significant cost. Whereas there could be wineries who care about the tourist nature of their products, for whom the adhesion to a WFR's collective trademark could be helpful. Otherwise, among them, could be wine farm that have a high quality standard, for which the adoption of WFR' CT is not profitable. Sometimes wine makers consider difficulties exist because of the perception that they are not part of tourism (Mitchell et al., 2006).

The adoption of the collective trademark presents some problems concerning the quality standard associated to the mark. In fact a minimum quality standard has to assured by the mark. It provides information about the average quality of the WFR's wineries using the same trademark. Therefore, it could become a negative signal if quality decrease and the absence of WFR's CT will represent a better situation.

Politicians sell policies in exchange of votes and maximising the votes is their main utilitarian goal. The interest of the local politician is the re-election. Voters are perfectly informed on the payoffs and costs of the game and vote accordingly in a public choice perspective (Down, 1957; Mueller, 2003).

The *status quo* situation is represented by the absence of the WFR's collective trademark.

The payoffs are and for the wine market oriented and wine tourism market oriented wineries respectively.

The game runs three stages.

The first stage: Policy-maker has to decide whether to introduce or not the Wine and Food Route's collective trademark (WFR's CT). The model assumes that the objective of the policy-maker is to maximize the probability of gaining his re-election. The institution of the WFR's CT implies changes in the pay-off for any of the N individuals.

The second stage: Each wine producer in the local area has to decide whether to participate or not to the WFR's CT to sell its product to the tourist market.

The wine market oriented firm cares in the monetary profit a benefit from the adhesion to the WFR's CT. About wine tourism market oriented firm, some of them consider that the adhesion to the WFR's CT may represent a high cost in terms of its own reputation, if the entrepreneurial quality is higher than the average quality of the club of wineries coming into the WFR, the non-coming option can be preferable for them.

The pay-off got when the WFR's CT is promoted by the policy-maker can be larger or smaller as compared to the pay-off got in the case of non-existence of a WFR's CT.

The third stage: Elections take place. Each wine entrepreneur compares his own utility in the case of non-existence of a WFR's CT with the utility drawn at the end of the second step. If, and only if, his utility has increased, he votes for the re-election of the policy-maker.

Within small local communities usually entrepreneurial initiatives of a political boss are crucial and the community does not play any social role. The N wineries, in this case, behave according to an individualistic perspective.

The policy-maker chooses the creation of WFR's CT, the wineries choose on whether to adhere or not to the WFR's collective trademark for ameliorating their performance.

Each firm that represents each individual in the local community can choose between two actions: *adhere* and *non-adhere to WFR's collective trademark*.

The individual payoffs depend on the decision taken by all the agents and are summarized in the following Matrix:

Matrix 1 – The interaction among wineries in the second step of the game

		W^{WTM}	
		<i>a</i>	<i>na</i>
W^{WM}	<i>a</i>		
	<i>na</i>		

Payoff e means exit: it is if W^{WTM} decide not to adhere to the WFR's CT while the W^{WM} decide to adopt. $E > 0$ means that is both W^{WTM} and W^{WM} decide to adhere to the WFR-CT, W^{WM} receives a positive externality from the adhesion of W^{WTM} , while W^{WTM} receives a negative externality. The adhesion to the WFR-CT is profitable for W^{WTM} if the W^{WM} decide not to adopt.

The game summarized by matrix 1 shows that player W^{WTM} has a dominant strategy: *adhere*. As the player W^{WTM} it needs to distinguish two cases:

- (1) if the strategy *adhere* is dominant for him;
- (2) if no dominant strategy exists for him.

Thus, in the case (1), the game in matrix 1 has a Nash-equilibrium in dominant strategies ($a - a$), while in the case (2), the Nash-equilibrium is ($a - na$). In the Nash-equilibrium of case (1), the wineries wine market oriented (represented by Player W^{WM}) benefit from an increase in their pay-off, with respect to the *status quo* situation, while the change of the pay-off for the wine tourism market oriented wineries (represented by W^{WTM}) can be:

positive if e is larger than $(1-A)$
 or negative if e is smaller than $(1-B)$

Similarly in the case (2), in the Nash-equilibrium, the wine market firms benefit from an increase in their payoff, with respect to the *status quo* situation, while the change of the payoff for the wine tourism wineries can be:

positive if e is larger than $(2-A)$
 or negative if e is smaller than $(2-B)$

At the third stage of the game, (under the case 1-A) all the wineries benefit from passing from the *status quo* to the Nash-equilibrium ($a-a$), and the re-election of the policy maker is guaranteed. The policy-maker, indeed, decides to introduce the wine and food route at the first stage of the game and expects that all the wineries adhere to the WFR's collective trademark and vote for his re-election at the third stage of the game.

The Nash-equilibrium under the case (1-B), is ($a-a$), but the wine market oriented wineries find the Nash-equilibrium situation preferable with respect to the *status quo*, while the wine tourism market oriented wineries find the Nash-equilibrium worse than the *status quo*.

At this point, it is necessary to distinguish two situations: let us name them as (1-B1) and (1-B2).

In (1-B1), if $W^{WM} > W^{WTM}$ the number of wineries benefited by the introduction of the WFR's CT is larger than the number of wineries who prefer the *status quo*, and then the maximum probability of re-election for the policy-maker derives from the introduction of the WFR's CT. The game's equilibrium is given by the following sequence:

the policy-maker introduce the WFR's CT; only the wine market oriented wineries adopt the WFR's CT; the fraction $W^{WM}/W > 1/2$ vote for the re-election of the policy-maker.

In (1-B2), $W^{WM} < W^{WTM}$ the number of wineries who prefers the *status quo* is larger than the number of wineries preferring the Nash-equilibrium(a-a) and the probability of re-election is maximized by the non introduction of the WFR's CT. The perfect equilibrium of the game is represented by the *status quo*.

For what concerns the case (2), in which the equilibrium is (a-na), in the case (2-A), all the wineries gain an increase of payoff through the presence of the WFR. Both the wine market oriented and the wine tourism oriented wineries gain an increase in profits. The equilibrium is given by the introduction of the WFR in the first stage of the game, the adhesion to the WFR by part of wine market oriented wineries only in the second stage and the re-election for policy maker in the third stage of the game. In the case of (2-B), the wine market oriented wineries prefer the Nash-equilibrium with respect to the *status quo*, while the wine tourism market oriented wineries prefer the *status quo*.

Also in that case, it is necessary to distinguish two situations: (2-B1) and (2-B2). In (2-B1), if $W^{WM} > W^{WTM}$ the number of wineries, which benefit by the introduction of the WFR is larger than the number of wineries who prefer the *status quo*. Therefore, the maximum probability of the re-election derives from the setting up of the WFR. The game's equilibrium is given by the following sequence: the policy-maker introduces the WFR, the fraction $W^{WM}/W > 1/2$ of wineries adheres to the WFR and votes for the re-election of the policy-maker. In (2-B2), if $W^{WM} < W^{WTM}$ the number of wineries who prefer the *status quo* is larger than the number of agents preferring the Nash-equilibrium (a-na), which would emerge in the second stage of the game. The setting up of the WFR would lead to the non re-election for the policy-maker in the third stage of the game. Thus, at the first stage of the game policy-maker decides not to propose the WFR's CT and the perfect equilibrium is represented by the *status quo* situation.

Finally, the $W^{WM} > W^{WTM}$ condition is sufficient but not necessary to create the WFR's CT, on the contrary the $W^{WTM} > W^{WM}$ condition is necessary but not sufficient for the decision of non creating the collective trademark.

All these considerations derive from the objective of policy-maker, who cares only to his re-election, without any interest towards the social welfare.

4 – Conclusions

Wine and Food routes are generally created by public subjects and specifically by local policy-makers; thus, wine producers decide to adhere or not. The policy-maker goal is his re-election. His objective, in terms of maximizing votes, can lead to decisions that are not efficient in economic terms. In fact, politicians have to take some decisions that care mainly on the political consensus. Under these hypotheses the theoretical model has shown that very different outcomes are possible: the non introduction of a Wine and Food Route's collective trademark, can be a perfect equilibrium; otherwise, its introduction can be efficient or inefficient both under the case that all wineries adhere to it and under the case that only a fraction of wineries decide to adhere to it. It has been noted also that the condition in which wine market oriented wineries are more then wine tourism market oriented wineries is sufficient but not necessary to create the WFR CT, while the condition in which W^{WM} are less then W^{WTM} is necessary but not sufficient for the decision of non creating the WFR CT. The reality seems to confirm the outcomes coming by the theoretical model.

In Italy WFRs represent a system where the creation of the collective trademark appears to be inefficient. The managing costs do not reward the profit of the wineries adopting eventually the mark because the perceived quality is low and some wineries free-ride over the quality. If the differences between maximum and average quality is limited, the mark is adopted by all wine makers and its existence is likely efficient. Otherwise, when some wine makers realize that the quality of his production increases and the WFR – CT is not able to represent this change, then they could decide to exit by the WFR and so by its collective trademark. The creation of a collective trademark, useful to guarantee high quality standards, can be efficient or not as well as the non creation of the mark. Eventually, the adhesion to a WFR's collective trademark by part of local wine producers can be total or partial, all wineries may decide to adopt the mark. The use of WFR as a trademark can stimulate entrepreneurs to improve the quality of their goods and thus foster competition.

Nevertheless, to achieve these goals, it is necessary to build a synergy between public and private stakeholders based on trust and ethics, also if this phase is clearly the most difficult in the process of synergy creation. The collective trademark institution and management within a WFR need a deal of cooperation among the local producers to reach common goals (Bruwer, 2003; Hall *et al.*, 1997; Novelli *et al.*, 2006).

It could be depending on the pre-existing social networks since they form the basis for the interaction. Alliances among local players involved in different industrial areas and acting within WFR can generate improved quality of services, enhanced visibility and cross-marketing activities with other members and the involvement in local events like wine festivals, which attract day-trippers to the wine regions. Furthermore, a strong relationship between entrepreneurs and public institutions in the short run should be a way to reinforce entrepreneurial cooperation and encourage further business development in the long run.

According to Censis (2011), the evaluation of a local mark becomes the best strategy to obtain positive effects (64,5%). Therefore, it is necessary, more than in the past, to stimulate local specificities through local trademarks. Either local policy makers (66,1%) or wine entrepreneurs (61,6%) within WFRs intend to cooperate to ameliorate wine tourist offer and improve the international market position.

Definitely, this study showed that WFRs characterised by a strong cooperation between public and private subjects (40 wineries in Italy) work really well to promote tourism. They present a great number of wine tourism market oriented firms and are those that arranged a good wine tourism offer. Besides, WFRs that do not have any cooperation are not able to manage local wine tourism offer. The WFR, therefore, can be representing a great opportunity for collaboration, involvement in government initiatives and successful business operations. In that sense, WFR should be considered as a process rather than an outcome and it can contribute in the innovation process of tourism in Italy and can help to the regional development.

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