

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Diagnosis of the tourism potential of the municipality of Báguanos

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### ABSTRACT

Tourism can become a strategy for local and regional development considering that tourism modes are increasingly expanding and adjusting to the needs of tourism consumers. The purpose of the research was oriented to diagnose the tourist potentialities of Báguanos municipality in Holguín province of Cuba, for the future implementation of a tourist development plan. The municipality and its potentialities for tourism development were characterized, the first two stages of the methodology used (Preparation and Diagnosis) were developed, it is concluded that Báguanos has a great amount of resources that are not being exploited and presents deficiencies in the management of the tourist infrastructure.

**Keywords:** diagnosis; tourism potentials; local development

## 1. Introduction

Tourism has positioned itself as one of the most important economic activities on a global scale; therefore, the creation of tourism products that diversify the supply of attractions in destinations and, therefore, satisfy the needs of tourists has become relevant<sup>[1]</sup>.

Tourism activity continues to grow steadily, consolidating itself as an important source of foreign exchange, constituting an opportunity for diversification of the economy for many territories<sup>[2]</sup>.

To achieve tourism development there is a need to think globally, but act locally<sup>[3]</sup>, so it is not only necessary to know how the main flows of tourists move in the world, but also to have a knowledge of the territory to adopt the measures and strategies

more in line with the existing potentialities in the area to be developed. Therefore, local development is sought, which is defined as: The process of economic growth and structural change that leads to an improvement in the standard of living of the local population through tourism<sup>[4]</sup>.

Therefore defines Local Development as “a localized process of continuous socio-economic change, which, led by local governments, integrates and coordinates the use of the wealth of its development potential with the different resource flows, to achieve the progress of the locality and enable the welfare of human beings, in balance with the natural environment”<sup>[5]</sup>. Local economic development includes, in addition to economic development, human, social and environmental development<sup>[6]</sup>.

Tourism is an activity that is currently recognized as an engine of development in a territory,

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: December 28, 2021 | Accepted: January 20, 2022 | Available online: February 14, 2022

### CITATION

Varona-Leyva FL, Vega-de la Cruz LO. Diagnosis of the tourism potential of the municipality of Báguanos. Smart Tourism 2022; 3(1): 10 pages.

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causing different governments and private entities to give it greater attention by promoting different programs and activities to promote it.

As stated by Vera Rebollo et al.<sup>[7]</sup>: “Tourism should be recognized as a part of the construction of new spaces for growth at regional and local scales, in the transformation of societies and territories”.

Before the emergence of local and regional tourism development initiatives, a methodology to be followed should be proposed in order to plan the new tourism space<sup>[2]</sup>.

Cuba’s National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030 is based on strategic axes and sectors. The axes express the main dimensions that make up the economic, political, social and environmental panorama of society. They are defined with the purpose of facilitating the study and determination of the fundamental interrelationships between each of them and, in this way, ensuring the integral and systemic approach in the process of elaborating the country’s development strategy<sup>[8]</sup>.

Among the strategic sectors that can have a local expression is tourism, which, in addition to continuing to boost the macroeconomy, can and should be developed at that level in those spaces whose tourism vocation corresponds to market trends and demands<sup>[9]</sup>.

To this end, tourism products are designed in each locality in accordance with its tourism heritage and its correspondence with market trends, generating income and employment for the actors and the community involved<sup>[8]</sup>. The increase in the number of tourist products and their planning lead to the conformation of local tourist destinations that, depending on their quality, are highly competitive in the international market, if one takes into account the wealth of tourist attractions that Cuba has to offer, especially in modalities such as Nature Tourism and Rural Tourism, called to have significant growth, after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The municipality of Báguanos possesses a set of resources that could give to Holguín destination one or several products that are distinguished by their authenticity and singularity in the market contributing to the diversification of its offer. Starting from the ignorance of the resources of the municipality and the knowledge of its potential for a future tourist development, the need arises to make a diagnosis of the tourist potentialities of the same one, since it possesses a set of resources that could give to Holguín destination products that are distinguished by their authenticity and singularity in the market contributing to the diversification of its offer with the purpose of contributing to the improvement of the territory. The main problem of the research is the insufficient use of the tourist potentialities of the Báguanos municipality. Therefore, the objective of this article is to diagnose the tourism potential of the municipality of Báguanos for the future implementation of a tourism development plan.

## **2. Materials and methods**

This research focuses on highlighting the resources available in the territory that could enhance tourism development. For this purpose, the Methodology for designing a local tourism development program proposed by Pena Leyva was used, which consists of five stages, shown in a summarized manner in **Figure 1**, but of which the author decided to apply only its first 2 stages (preparation and diagnosis) which are explained below.

### **2.1. Stage No. 1 preparation**

It constitutes the initial stage that is carried out by the authorities of the municipality with the advice and help of some specialists, with the objective of assessing whether the conditions are favorable for a tourism development initiative. The stage consists of five steps that are described below:

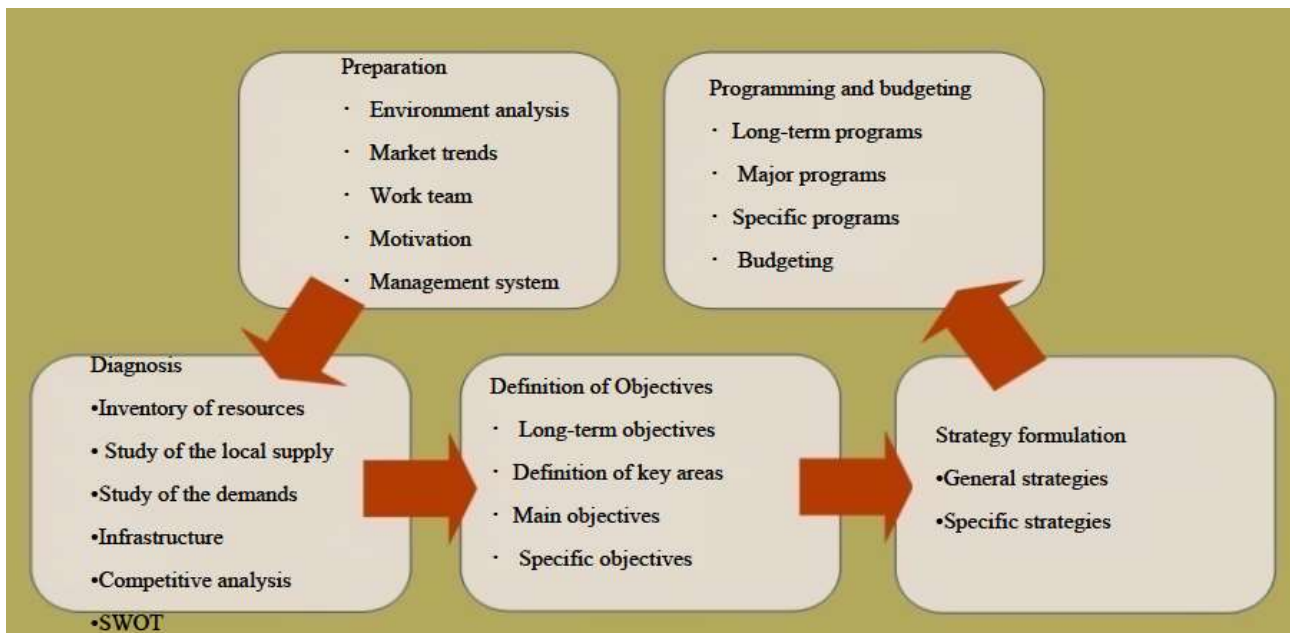


Figure 1. Methodology of the local tourism development program.

### ***Analysis of the environment***

This is the evaluation of the local environment, in order to determine the possibilities, it offers for the development of tourism activity. It refers specifically to the physical-environmental characteristics, the characteristics of the socioeconomic environment and the political-legal elements of the environment, related to the laws and regulations of the country.

### ***Market trends***

Consists of the analysis of tourism market trends, to determine to what extent they affect the territory, and the opportunities to take advantage of them for the benefit of municipal tourism development.

### ***Work team***

It must be formed by specialists in the different areas of tourism such as lodging, restoration, recreation, nautical, etc. and other branches of knowledge such as marketing, economy, physical planning, culture and others. No less important will be the identification of the leaders who will be able to adequately channel the work of the team.

### ***Motivation***

Once the environment and the existence of suitable people to form a work team have been evaluated,

the motivation of all those structures and people who should participate in the process should be initiated, from the government structures themselves, to the leadership of the political and mass organizations, the administrative leaderships that will be involved and the population in general.

### ***Management system***

This should take into account the tourism functions of the municipality and other elements of management related to the actions of the different actors of local tourism development, whose objective is the promotion and management of the destination, through which the tourism information of the territory is organized, managed and updated and tools are offered for the management of services that help to promote the destination.

## **2.2. Stage No. 2 diagnosis**

In this stage, the conditions that the municipality has for tourism will be analyzed in order to determine the key elements that make up the territory. This should include the following elements:

### ***Inventory of resources***

It is the survey, classification and registration of the tourist resources that the municipality has. It can be done in parts, starting with the elements that

are of special interest because they are part of the offer that can be launched to the market and will be classified into natural and historical-cultural or other categories.

### ***Study of the local supply***

Both the state and private supply of lodging, restaurant and recreation services existing in the territory will be considered, as well as their possibilities of satisfying the needs and expectations of future demand.

### ***Study of the demand***

In the analysis of demand, quantitative (number of tourists, length of stay, average expenditure, etc.) and qualitative (origin, motivations, preferred activities, etc.) information on tourists visiting the destination should be gathered.

### ***Technical infrastructure***

This refers to the endowment of goods and services that a territory has to sustain its social and productive structures and as such conditions tourism development. It includes the following:

(1) Basic services (water, electricity, telephone, garbage collection, sanitation, etc.). (2) Transportation (ports, airports, buses, cabs). (3) Roads (existing roads, condition). (4) Services (commerce, communications, etc.).

### ***Competitor analysis***

In this case, it is of interest to compare the study territory with others with greater tourism development and the aspects to be analyzed are:

(1) Main territories with which it would compete. (2) What products they offer in the market. (3) Strengths and weaknesses of the competing territories. (4) SWOT.

## **3. Results**

Partial application of the Methodology for designing a local tourism development program proposed by Pena Leyva (2016). As the methodology is aimed at local authorities, they should develop this

stage when they decide to embark on the path of tourism development.

### **3.1. Analysis of the environment**

The following is a brief description of the physical-environmental setting and the socioeconomic environment of the Báguanos municipality. Likewise, the characteristics of the administrative legal environment of the country that influence the municipality are analyzed.

#### ***Physical-environmental environment***

Located in the center of Holguin province, it has a superficial extension of 803.4 square kilometers. It limits to the north with the municipalities of Rafael Freyre and Banes, to the south with the municipalities of Urbano Noris and Cueto, to the east with those of Banes and Mayari and to the west with the municipalities of Holguin and Cacocum.

The municipality has 11 popular councils: Báguanos, La Esperanza, La Caridad, Los Haticos, Manguito, Potrerillo, Tacajó, Alcalá, San Geronimo, Bijarú, and Union 6 of these the most important are Báguanos and Tacajó.

In its relief predominate medium, high and low plains interrupted by small elevations with fertile soils suitable for the development of agriculture have been built dams, micro dams for the reservoir of regulated waters.

The rainfall regime is subject to the meteorological changes derived from the seasons of the year, with greater incidence in the months of spring and summer. Temperatures are historically 27.5°C during the summer and 23°C during the winter, for an annual average of 25.3°C<sup>[10]</sup>.

#### ***Socioeconomic environment***

The main economic activity is agro-industrial sugar production at the Fernando de Dios and López-Pena sugar mills, which operate with potential daily milling rates of 340,000 and 320,000 arrobas de canes during the harvest season. Agricultural and

livestock production is also important, represented by one Livestock Company, 19 UBPCs, 11 CPAs and 29 CCSs.

**Relationship with tourism:** In the municipality is currently marketed under the ecotour chain the Alcalá farm, a space where tourists can admire and enjoy the home-like atmosphere of the Cuban peasant family, as well as the La Ceiba farm located in Tacámara marketed by Havanatur. There is also a farm dedicated to the cultivation of pineapple and honey bees located in La Guira. There are also tourism-related activities in the territory, such as paragliding in Cerro Galano<sup>[11]</sup>.

### ***Legal and administrative environment of the country***

Due to the constant updating of the country's economic model in search of sustainable development, municipalities have been given a higher level of decision making when managing their resources and carrying out development plans, which, in line with the interests of their respective province aim to raise the quality of life of their population. In addition, the non-state sector has been allowed to play a more prominent role allowing alliances between these and tourism entities, thus obtaining benefits such as obtaining a source of financing for some essential facilities for tourism development.

### ***Market trends***

In the world, changes in the socioeconomic, political, cultural and technological environment are constantly taking place in different countries and regions, and these are expressed in the different levels at which tourism activity is developed, in the form of trends. It can be distinguished as trends that influence, directly or indirectly in the tourist development of the municipality, the following:

(1) Expansion and diversification of the tourist activity, mainly in adventure, cultural and nature tourism as a consequence post-covid. (2) Growing development of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which has led to a higher level

of information to customers, who are now more selective when deciding the travel destination, and the emergence of what has been called smart destinations, consolidated on a cutting-edge technological infrastructure.

### ***Work team***

Currently in Báguanos there is no staff that works directly in any role related to tourism in the municipality, so it is necessary to join the efforts of specialists from other branches and incorporate their knowledge in terms of tourism.

### ***Motivation***

To motivate the population and the people who will direct and develop the activity in the territory, talks should be given explaining the benefits derived from municipal tourism development and listening to their opinions and suggestions so that they feel part of the change. They will be told about the multiplier effect, the possibility of investing in the sector, the creation of jobs and the income of foreign currency.

### ***Management system***

According to the considerations stated in the description of this step, it was concluded that Báguanos has the following characteristics:

(1) The government of the municipality has never had direct responsibilities with tourism therefore no tourism function is performed.

(2) Low level of involvement of public and private actors involved in tourism activities.

(3) Low level of exploitation of the territory's attributes for tourism activity.

(4) Lack of an updated web page for the municipality, nor is there a relationship with the media, etc., so promotional communication is insufficient.

(5) Lack of actions to create facilities for the consumption of natural resources.

(6) Although there is no plan for tourism projects, both the municipal government and the cultural

organization are engaged in reviving traditions and places of historical interest.

(7) There is no diagnostic basis for strategic tourism planning at the municipal level, which in turn impedes the development of tourism products.

### 3.2. Diagnosis

### *Inventory of tourism resources*

Báguanos has a wide variety of natural and historical-cultural resources that could be converted into attractions that reflect the traditional and authentic values of the territory. The study showed that the municipality has 19 natural and 42 cultural resources located mainly in the municipal capital, Tacajó and Alcalá (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Natural and historical-cultural resources of the municipality of Báguanos

Category	Subcategory	Name	Details
Fauna	Endemic	The polymite	
Fauna	Endemic	The majacito	
Fauna	Endemic	The four-legged snake	
Fauna	Endemic	Brown-eyed stick lizard	
Fauna	Endemic	Cenfru roidesba racae	
Fauna	Endemic	Rhopalu rusjunceu.s	
Fauna	Endemic	Cenfruroidesmelanodaetylus	
Vegetation	Endemic	The thorny xeromorphic scrub (Cuabal)	
Vegetation	Endemic	Annonanipensis	
Vegetation	Endemic	Acacia belairioides	
Vegetation	Endemic	Cocco io ba ewe lii	Critically endangered
Vegetation	Protected	Dwarf cactus	2 variants
Geomorphology	Montanag	Lomas de Rejondones	
Geomorphology	Montana	Alcalá	
Geomorphology	Mountain	Galano Hill	
Geomorphology	Mountain	Los Mates	
Geomorphology	River	Alcalá	
Geomorphology	Reservoirs	4 located in Báguanos, Tacajó, Camazán and Gibara.	
Paisaies*	Monumental	In the elevations of the municipality	
Architecture	Monumental	Sculpture the Dance	
Architecture	Monumental	The "Soviets of Tacajó	
Architecture	Monumental	The Locomotors April 2nd	
Architecture	Monumental	The Locomotors 50	
Architecture	Monumental	Fernando de Dios Sugar Complex	
Architecture	Moni-imental	López Peíla Sugar Complex	
Architecture	Monumental	Sculpture to the tree that whistles and sings	
Architecture	Monumental	Raspadura Factory	Built in the 19th century
Architecture	Monumental	Combat of Rejondones (Mambises)	
Architecture	Monumental	Rejondones Combat (Rebel Army)	
Architecture	Monumental	Maceo's Meeting in Bijarú	
Architecture	Monumental	Revolution Square	
Architecture	Monumental	Methodist Church	
Architecture	Monumental	Roseli Cruz Osorio Obelisk	Union 6
Architecture	Monumental	Nerio Hidalgo Obelisk	Los Ajíes
Architecture	Monumental	Obelisk Oel Nieves House	Los Ajíes
Architecture	Monumental	Oscar Elásques del Poso Obelisk	Camazán Dam
Architecture	Monumental	Blas Soler Ledea Obelisk	Camazán Dam
Architecture	Monumental	Flor Angel Fondín Obelisk	Camazán
Architecture	Monumental	Ruben Eravo Obelisk	The Gúira
Architecture	Monumental	José Marti Pérez Obelisk	La Caridad
Architecture	Monumental	Taria Roberto Escudero	Rancho 8
Architecture	Monumental	Roger Infante Fernandes Obelisk	The Gúira
Architecture	Monumental	Ofeho Caballero Obelisk	The Medlar Tree
Architecture	Monumental	Roberto Cuenca M. Obelisk	Potrérón
Architecture	Monumental	Hugo López Leyva Obelisk	Guasimita
Architecture	Monumental	EmisaelPaneque Osorio Obelisk	Tacamara 1

Table 1. (continued)

Category	Subcategory	Name	Details
Architecture	Monumental	Aboriginal findings (Los Mates, Salazar I and II)	
Architecture	Monumental	Alcalá aboriginal cemetery	
Architecture	Monumental	Parque de las Madres Statue	
Architecture	Monumental	Statue of the Indian	
Architecture	Monumental	Statue of José Martí	
Cultural Facilities	Museo	Báguanos and Tácajo	
Cultural Facilities	Art Galleries	Báguanos and Tácajo	
Festivals y Traditions	Popular	Carnivals	
Celebrations y Traditions	Popular	The Verbenas	
Festivals and Traditions	Popular	End of the Year and New Year	
Festivals and Traditions	Popular	26th of Juho	
Celebrations and Traditions	Popular	Pilon Coffee	
Festivities and Traditions	Legends	The myth of the Black Eagle	
Festivals and Traditions	Popular	Haitian Dance of Hope	
Gastronomy	Typical Flatos	Tacamara fried dough	

### *Analysis of the offer*

The municipality of Báguanos has 3 farms where tourism activities are carried out: La Ceiba located in Tacámara, which operates with the Havenatur travel agency. La finca de Alcalá which operates with Flora y Fauna and La finca de Pedro Pina which operates with the Cubatur travel agency.

Local offer:

(1) Lodging: In the municipality there is no hotel or establishment with the necessary conditions for the provision of services to tourism, however, given the boom of the non-state sector in Cuba, Báguanos has 2 peasant houses located in Alcalá.

(2) Restoration: In the municipality there are 4 restaurants El Mirador in El Manguito, El Jardín in Tacajó, El Ranchón de Alcalá and El Progreso in Báguanos, in addition to having 2 paladares.

(3) Recreation and leisure: There are two night-clubs (discotheques) and the supply in this area is very limited.

### *Demand analysis*

In the year 2019 in Cuba the main issuing markets, according to data of the MINTUR were Russia, Canada, USA, England, and Germany, in addition to Germany. In addition to the increase in domestic tourism, the main outbound markets for Cuba in 2019 were Russia, Canada, the USA, England and Germany.

Since there is not yet a tourist demand of the territory to be studied, the analysis will focus on the territory of Holguin since from this demand will derive to a great extent the demand of the municipality. In the case of Holguin destination, the main market is Russia followed by the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Cuba and Germany. The high number of visits reached in the period demonstrates the growing acceptance of this destination with potential not only in the sun and beach modality but also in nature, adventure and city tourism.

The main attractions visited by both national and international tourists in the Báguanos municipality were linked to some excursion in the 3 farms where tourism activities are carried out: the Ceiba located in Tacámara, the Alcalá farm that operates with Flora y Fauna and La finca de Pedro Pina that operates with the Cubatur travel agency<sup>[11]</sup>.

### *Technical infrastructure*

#### (1) Road network

The municipality is located 31 km from Holguin by the central highway which is in good condition. In addition to the access through Banes (47 km), which is also in good condition. In the municipal capital 30% of the streets are paved and in Tacajó 20% although many of these streets are in bad condition.

#### (2) Internal transportation

The municipality does not have any transportation company dedicated to foreign clients; it only has 14 vehicles belonging to the public service, which make an average of 3.3 trips per day, covering an average distance of 10 km from the center of the municipality to the provincial councils and the municipal capital.

### (3) Communications

The telecommunications company ETECSA guarantees telephone service in the territory, through fixed or alternative telephony. It also guarantees cellular coverage in the main urban centers and some rural settlements, although in most of them the signal is not good. Communication has also been incorporated through e-mail through the @nauta.cu accounts, and Internet access through the Joven Club de Computación and the Wi-Fi and mobile data service, which are present in the municipal capital, where the signal is better.

### (4) Electrical networks

98.6% of the local population has electricity in their homes and there are plans for the total electrification of the territory.

### (5) Aqueduct and sewerage systems

The aqueduct and sewage system doesn't cover the needs of the entire territory. Only 15.9% of the municipality's population has sewerage service and 50% of the municipality's inhabitants do not have aqueduct service.

### (6) Radio and television

The municipality has a plant that emits and receives signal thanks to Radio Holguin not existing a radio program dedicated to the municipality nor does it have a television program.

### (7) Commercial services

In Báguanos, there are only two chain stores:

CIMEX: Company to which the servicen-

tros belong, which dispense fuels and other merchandise, and there are 2 in the municipality.

TRD: There are currently 5 stores located in the municipal capital and Tacajó.

## ***Competitive analysis***

Mayari is one of the territory's tourist attractions because it has resources that can be used to offer a nature product, since it has a great diversity of flora, fauna and geomorphology found mainly in Pinares de Mayari, as well as Cayo Saetia, whose environment is a mixture of plains and forests with swamps in the northwestern sector.

## ***SWOT matrix***

Based on the analysis carried out, a series of external and internal factors (both positive and negative) were found that, due to their influence on the environment, it is necessary to know them in order to carry out an effective planning of the municipality:

### (1) Weaknesses

Scarce tourist infrastructure.

Lack of tourism development plans, so there is no tourism planning.

Lack of knowledge of the attractions of the municipality and of the tourism modalities applicable to the territory on the part of the local administration.

Pollution of urban areas by sugar mills.

Tourism preparedness of the people in the municipality.

### (2) Threats

Irreversible degradation of the resources by their bad use.

Impossibility of certain suitable investments due to the centralization of decisions at the national level.

Low implementation of the multiplier effect of tourism in the country's economy.



Tourist development of other neighboring municipalities that would have similar attractions within the territory.

Little diversification of the traditional markets of the Holguin Territory that traditionally develop the modality of Sun and Beach.

### (3) Strengths

Singularity and diversity of natural resources.

Diversity of historical and cultural resources.

Proximity to the municipality's main tourist centers.

Public safety and development in the areas of health, culture, education and sports.

Good conservation of the natural resources of the territory.

### (4) Opportunities

Increased interest of travelers in nature.

Willingness of the country's leadership to grant greater autonomy in the activities of the municipalities.

Increase in domestic tourism.

Tourist investments in the Ramón de Antilla and increase of the habitational capacity of Holguin.

Therefore, the municipality must work on the Tourism Development Plan and on the infrastructure that allows the enjoyment of its tourism resources to take advantage of the opportunities represented by the increase in tourism in the country and the investments in the Ramón de Antilla tourism pole and thus be able to mitigate the threats of the lack of diversification of markets and the future tourism development of neighboring municipalities, with similar products, through the exploitation of the uniqueness of its natural and cultural resources.

After carrying out the analysis, it can be con-

cluded that the municipality has the necessary characteristics to carry out tourism activities.

## 4. Conclusions

The bibliographic review revealed the existence of a broad theoretical base related to local tourism development that can be used for the design of tourism development plans at the local level.

The methodology corresponding to Pena Leyva's model was selected to develop the present study because it is framed in the Cuban municipal context.

A tourism diagnosis was elaborated for the Báguanos municipality resulting in the existence of three zones with tourism potentialities: Alcalá, Báguanos and Tacajó. Alcalá is the area with the best conditions and needs less investment for tourism development.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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