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USING CRITICAL PATH ANALYSIS (CPA) IN PLACE MARKETING PROCESS: A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH IN THE CASE OF ROSTOCK, GERMANY

1. INTRODUCTION: PLACE MARKETING AS A STRATEGIC PROCESS

For the last 30 years, place marketing as a strategic process has been in the spotlight, since many places globally use promotion policies to support their images, based on their distinctive characteristics and become competitive among other places (e.g. Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kotler *et al.*, 1993; 1999; Ward, 1998; Warnaby *et al.*, 2005; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005; Metaxas, 2009; Hospers, 2011). Place marketing based on Strategic Image Management (SIM) (Kotler *et al.*, 1999, p 160), starts from the identification of place vision and the primary development objectives that have to be satisfied, including also tactical planning actions (e.g. Amdam, 2004; Strategic Plan for Prague, 1999; Glasgow Tourism Action Plan, 2002–2007). As in traditional marketing, in place marketing ‘final produced good’, which is the image of the place, must/should first identify potential target markets, the existence of distribution channels and the selection of appropriate promotional means, strategies, tactics and alternative scenarios. In this framework, several studies focus on segmentation of target markets, particularly in tourist destinations (i.e. Bowen, 1998; Yuksel and Yuksel, 2002; Litvin, 2000; Kaufman and Upchurch, 2006), the development of distribution channels (i.e. Weitz and Sandy, 1995; Chevrant-Breton, 1997; Nuttavuthisit, 2007) and specific promotion strategies (i.e. Paddison, 1993; Nel and Binns, 2002). A crucial point is that effective

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implementation of place marketing requires active involvement of public and private sector of the place, as well as their inhabitants (Insch and Florek, 2008).

The additional value of the article is the implementation of a methodological strategic planning process based on 'project' operation, in order for Place Marketing actions to be scheduled in a particular time horizon, where control or rescheduling of the plan will be effective any time. The 'project' is strongly depended on the time schedule. The time schedule is a set of dates related with the operation of the project, which records both forecasting and monitoring of project duration. According to Turner (2009), the purpose of recording these dates and times is: a) to ensure that benefits are obtained at a timescale which justifies the expenditure, b) to coordinate the effort of resources, c) to enable the resources to be available when required and d) to predict the levels of money and resources required at different times so that priorities can be assigned between projects.

2. MAIN HYPOTHESES

Based on the above, the following hypotheses are made:

H1: *The nature of Place Marketing is a strategic process, which is characterized as any strategic action in certain specified parameters.*

These are: a) design and development of identified actions, b) determination of the significance of these actions and their hierarchy and c) implementation of these actions in specific time horizon.

H2: *The design and development of Place Marketing as a 'project' has specific phases (planning, programming, implementation and feedback) in the time horizon within which the selected actions have taken place (Mastop and Faludi, 1997; Pinson, 2002).*

H3: *The development of Place Marketing requires 'entrepreneurial and organizing capacity' from local actors, especially in management and control level (Hall and Hubbard, 1998; van den Berg and Braun, 1999).*

H4: *CPA could become an effective tool of Place Marketing development.*

Following the hypotheses above, we define Place Marketing as a very important 'tool' of local development and competitiveness, which is effective when it is designed and implemented strategically. For this reason, we propose to use Critical Path Analysis (CPA), which has the potential to satisfy the above hypotheses, having been applied in various cases of design and scheduling (e.g. Charnes *et. al.*, 1964; Berztiss, 1980; Anderson and Hales, 1986; Friedman and Seaton, 1998; Saidi, 2009).

3. USING CPA IN PLACE MARKETING

CPA is a mathematical procedure that calculates a project's schedule. Taking each action in turn it first calculates how quickly the action can be accomplished – its early start and early finish dates. Once all these dates have been calculated, the project finish date can also be determined. With this finish date known, CPA can then calculate how slowly each action can be accomplished (late start and late finish dates). Once all this information is known for each action, CPA will also calculate the slack (or float) of the task. The following values need to be calculated (table 1): ES = Early Start, EF = Early Finish, LS = Late Start, LF = Late Finish, TS = Total Slack.

Table 1. CPA values

ES	d (duration in days)	EF
	A (Task name / activity code)	
LS	TS	LF

Source: authors' elaboration.

As duration (d) we mean the time required to do the work. It is common to treat a work element's duration as a fixed given. For some, it is dependent on external factors beyond the control of the team. Once the work starts, but before it finishes we can estimate the remaining duration. This may be equal to the planned duration less the time since the activity started, or we may re-estimate remaining duration based on the knowledge gained from doing the work so far. More specifically, CPA is based on identification of three basic factors: a) *Hierarchical presentation of activities*: Characterizes each activity with a particular name (code), b) *Immediate predecessor*: Presents and distinguishes primary and secondary activities and c) *Time horizon*: The time of each activity to be finished. CPA has four phases of development: Planning, Programming, Implementation and Feedback. More specifically, in a hypothetical scenario of Place Marketing process, these phases are the following:

Planning: The first step is the creation of the Executive Management Group (EMG), which will take the responsibility to plan and perform the Pilot Marketing Plan. The crucial point is that the effectiveness of the whole project is based on the planning phase. Any kind of steps delay means delay of the following phases and consequently delay of the whole project. In our scenario, the overall time horizon of this phase is *120 working days*, which includes primary and secondary actions.

Programming: In this phase, the EMG has to schedule a number of core actions that need to take place before the phase of implementation. Programming requires brainstorming methods and discussions between the participating actors. In this case, the overall time horizon of this phase is *60 working days* that include primary and secondary actions.

Implementation: This is the promotion phase. The time horizon of each action is potential time and mainly concerns the time schedule of these actions. The phase of Implementation is the longest one. In our scenario, the overall time horizon is almost *175 working days* that include primary and secondary actions.

Evaluation – Feedback: It is related with the evaluation of the actions that take place in the phase of the implementation. The main aim of this final phase is the making by EMG of final decisions in order to continue the programme by preparing the ‘Official Place Marketing Plan’, or to reject the whole effort. The umbrella of this process is the vision of the place and the major development objectives. EMG needs to implement a flexible, innovative plan, which is in accordance with the evidence. In other words, it is necessary to provide an official plan that meets the demands of the potential target markets on the one hand and place development objectives on the other. In our scenario, the overall time horizon of this phase is almost *55 working days* that include primary and secondary actions.

4. CHOOSING A PLACE MARKETING MODEL: THE ‘8PS’ BY MORRISON

Essentially, the marketing mix models range from the traditional model of ‘4Ps’ (product, price, place, promotion) by Kotler (1986) and its performance in place marketing. Moreover, the model of ‘7Ps’ is evaluated (Ivy, 2008; Constantinides, 2002; Martinez-Caro and Roemer, 2006). This study proposes the model of ‘8Ps’ (Morrison, 1999) (product, partnership, people, packaging, programme, place, price, promotion), which is primarily used in tourism, but it may be applied in other sectors as well. The choice of this model was dictated by the following reasons: a) in relation to the model of ‘4Ps’, which is clearly a business model, the model of ‘8 Ps’ is more detailed and includes parameters such as ‘partnership’, ‘people’ and ‘packaging’, which are essential for the successful implementation of a place marketing plan, b) in relation to the ‘7 Ps’ model, it is more representative as it focuses only on the services sector, since the promotion of a place image is much more complex in design and implementation c) region marketing, due to its specificity, in order to be effective requires cooperation among local actors, and d) this model was used in four European regions within the research programme *CultMark* with considerable success, and therefore we argue that this experience has a great added value to the relative regions, always taking into consideration the special characteristics and the dynamics of each region (Deffner and Metaxas,

2006). Acting methodologically we should incorporate the phases of ‘8 Ps’ model into the development of CPA. The ‘8 Ps’ model should be integrated functionally and temporally in similar stages of CPA development in order to design and implement specific actions at specific time horizons, without time delays to cause problems to the entire implementation of the project.

5. ROSTOCK IN BRIEF

Rostock was chosen as a case study for the following reasons. Firstly, Rostock participated in European programme *CultMark*, which provided a substantial opportunity of studying the region deeply. Secondly, after a completely new start in the wake of the political change of 1989 the economy of Rostock is now on the right track. The region’s areas of economic competence include: maritime commerce, logistics and transport infrastructure, food technology, renewable energy, bio-medicine, bio-technology and tourism.

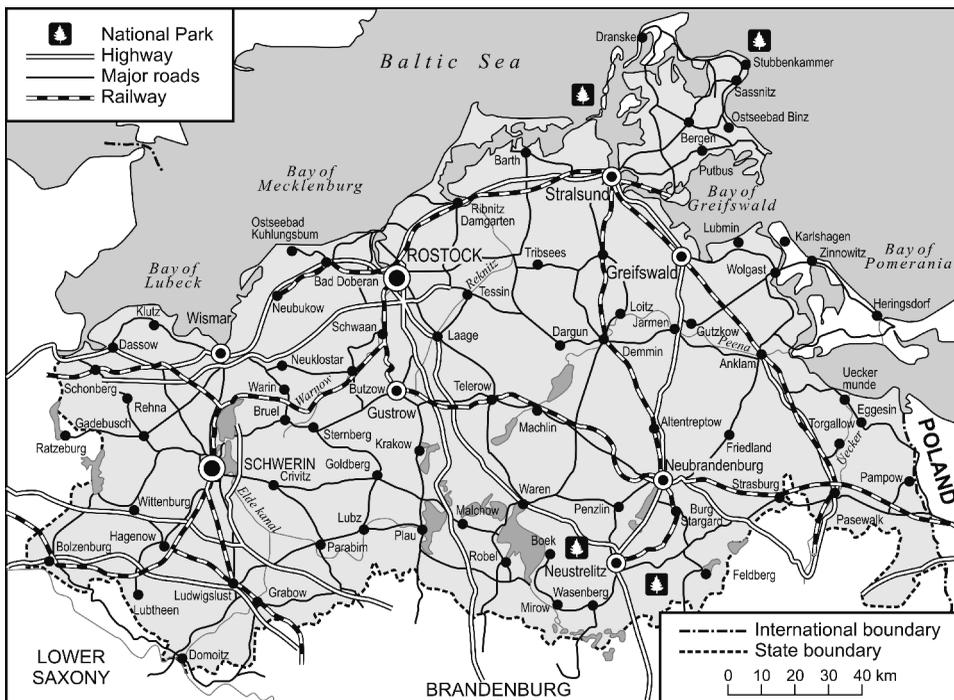


Fig. 1. The Federal State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Source: www.mapsofworld.com/germany/ (10.11.2015)

The basic features of culturally-based city marketing development dynamics in Rostock are presented in table 2. These would enable policy-makers to make comprehensive decisions with regard to the development of place marketing. Using SWOT analysis particular determinants, related to Rostock's *internal* and *external environment* and based on them, the image of Rostock as a 'final provided good' is obtained. This combination reflects the development of two primary production sectors: *culture* and *business* (figure 2). The combination of activities in common between these sectors is difficult, but consists of the overall concept of the competitiveness of Rostock and tourism sustainability. Rostock has to invest in market research and target market segmentations. The city has also to develop its promotional policies in two geographical areas. The first area covers the Baltic States region, in which Rostock tries to maintain its position and dominance among other similar cities, and the second area is Western Europe, mainly, and Europe as a whole (CultMark, 2004a).

Table 2. SWOT analysis for Rostock

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High accessibility and centrality of location (in E.C. terms) 2. Substantial cultural infrastructure 3. Large local market (urban agglomeration with potential of supraregional significance) 4. Ideal hotel and host infrastructure 5. Museum with a rich stock in its storehouses, first class exhibitions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not marked cultural identity 2. Too weak tourist industry 3. Inadequate place-promotion and tourism-development policies 4. Relatively unfavourable climate/weather conditions 5. Political mistakes in culture and tourism development policy
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Globalization, European integration and new emergent markets 2. Participation in place and thematic networks (national and international e.g. CultMark) 3. Public-private partnerships and new governance 4. E.C. and national funds 5. Technological developments in support of city marketing 6. Integration of the German economy bridging east-west divide 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing place competitiveness 2. Reduction of funds available (local, national, E.C.) 3. Institutional inflexibility (lack of PPPs) 4. Unfavourable macroeconomic conditions 5. Politically imposed depreciation of the rich cultural infrastructure, repeatedly wrong priority selection 6. Mismanagement, lack of management and fundraising competence, ignorance of E.C. grant opportunities and international networking

Source: authors' elaboration.

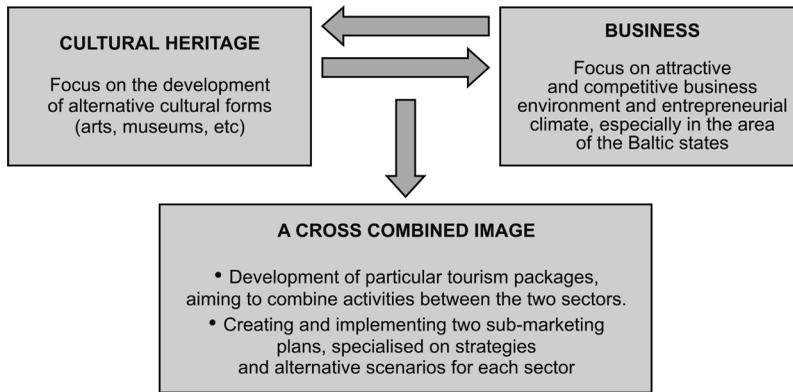


Fig. 2. Shaping the final provided good of Rostock
Source: authors' elaboration

6. CRITICAL PATH AND MORRISON'S '8PS' MODEL IN THE CASE OF ROSTOCK

The analysis of the internal environment of Rostock shows dynamic development of two axes, business and culture. The city might be a very attractive destination for FDI, due to its important geographical position (very close to the region of the Baltic countries). The above data derive from studies and field investigations conducted during the research programme CultMark (2004a, 2005b).

Table 3 presents activities of the *planning* phase of CPA. In the three columns of the table are presented the codes of each action, from the total 12 actions (A, B, C, D ... L), the immediate predecessor refers to the codes of the actions which must necessarily precede (primary actions) for the subsequent implementation of other actions (secondary actions) and the last column presents the duration that is potentially required for the completion of each action, expressed in days. The aim is to identify the actions (and their duration) which have to be developed as soon as the previous one is completed and the actions that should be developed in parallel with the primary one. The chosen actions of the present phase are considered general because they are the first actions that represent the overall planning framework within which will be realized the other phases of the following actions. Thus we could say that these actions may be common to any region wishing to develop a marketing plan regardless of the particular features that it has. The basis for the selection of these actions is the specificity of the characteristics of each region and in this case we refer to the characteristics of the city of Rostock. It is noted for example that action C refers to the analysis of the competition in the

Baltic region and in the wider region of the Western European countries. The choice of this action is related to the geographic location of the city of Rostock.

Table 3. Planning phase of CPM

	Activities	Activity code	Immediate predecessor	Time (days)
1	Composition of the executive management group (EMG) (Morrison model: partnership and people)	A	–	5
2	Analysis of competition in regional and national level	B	A	10
3	Analysis of competition in Baltic's area and the wider West European countries	C	A	15
4	Identification of the 'final provided good' (Morrison model: product)		A	10
5	Creation of Culture and Business 'packages' (Morrison model: packaging and pricing)	E	D	15
6	Re-evaluation of the selected target markets based on their characteristics analysis – Choose the appropriate sample (internal environment)	F	D, E	10
7	Re-evaluation of the selected target markets based on their characteristics analysis – Choose the appropriate sample (external environment)	G	D, E	10
8	Selection of the distributors for each part of the 'final provided good' (Morrison model: place)	H	F	10
9	Evaluation of the selected strategies and tactics per target market (internal environment)	I	F	10
10	Evaluation of the selected strategies and tactics per target market (external environment)	J	F, I	10
11	Evaluation and final selection of the promotional means (Morrison model: promotion)	K	D, E, I, J	10
12	EMG meeting 1	L	K	5
End of the first phase				120

Source: authors' elaboration.

The actions of the Planning refer to the composition of the wider framework within which the actions of the next phases will be developed. In the planning phase as in the following ones the '8 Ps' model is adapted depending on the type of the action. Therefore, for example in action A the composition of the EMG requires the development of *partnership* between people – more specifically between the groups that participate in this action (i.e. local decision-makers, citizens, firms etc.), while action H is related with *place*, concerning the distribution channels of Rostock's image. Finally, each action is potentially planned within a time horizon of a certain number of days. The time horizon of each action is determined by the type of the action and by the degree of difficulty regarding its implementation. For example, action E is scheduled to be implemented in 15 working days, because it requires innovative design of specific 'cultural and business packages' which will be the main components of the composition of Rostock's image as a final provided good. In figure 3 are presented the actions of the Planning and the Critical Path is created between primary and secondary actions. Of the 12 actions, 8 are primary, so their development requires completion of the preceding ones, and 4 are secondary, which means that they can be developed at the same time as the others. Following figure 3, we enter an ES value of 0 for action A that has no predecessor. For each of the following actions, their EF value will be calculated from ES value plus the activity duration (for example; action E has ES = 15 days derived from D and EF = 30 days (ES = 15 days + E (d) = 15). Actions B and C have a common predecessor, the ES value for both of them will be the same as the EF value for their common predecessor, action A (where EF = 5 days). Similarly structured are the actions until the last one. On the other side, working through the network (figure 2) from right to left, the backward pass calculates late start and late finish dates for each action. To calculate slack values for each action, use the formula: $LS = LF - ES - \text{Duration}$. For example, the last action of the *Planning* phase is L with duration (d) 5 days. Following the formula $TS = LF - ES - \text{Duration}$ we have: $LS = LF (75 \text{ days}) - ES (70 \text{ days}) = 5 \text{ days} - (d \text{ of L action}) = 5 - 5 = 0$.

The same procedure is applied in all phases of CPM. Actions A and D are considered important because as soon as they are implemented the rest of the actions will take place. And this is logical if we consider that action A is the starting point of planning, while action D refers to the composition of the final provided good regardless of the pricing, the distribution, the promotion and the evaluation of potential target markets. All phases are completed with the meeting of EMG which evaluates the entire progress of the phase per action, and generally prepares the ground so as to continue to the next phase.

Similarly are synthesized the following phases of CPA, *Programming*, *Implementation* and *Feedback*. Throughout these phases the project ends at having a time horizon of 410 days, of which 220 are related to primary actions and 190 to secondary actions. Particularly, in *Programming* the actions that will take place in *Implementation* are programmed. Particularly, during the programming

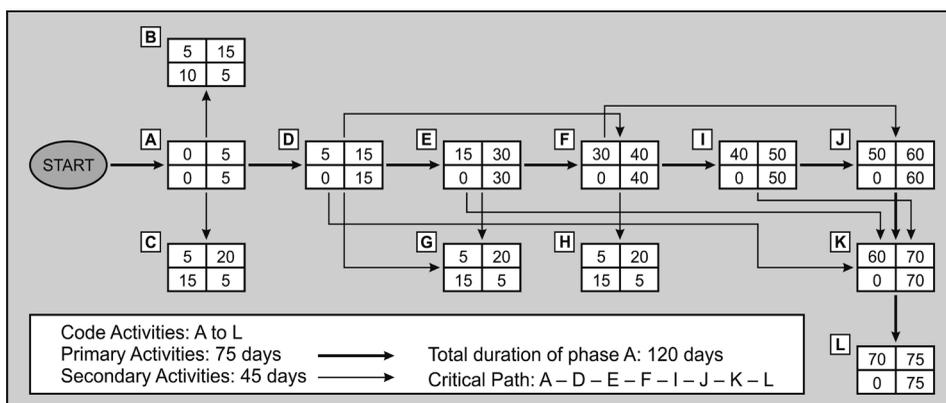


Fig. 3. Critical path diagram of the 1st phase

Source: authors' elaboration

stage (table 4, figure 4), the evaluation and the organization of the procedures related to the communication take place the analysis of target markets, the actions of supporting the image of the city and the creation of business and cultural packages. Attention should be paid to action R, whose implementation requires the development of all previous phases. The programming phase is the shortest regarding the time compared to the other phases of the project and it is the one that sets the framework and the axes on which the action will take place in the next phase, *Implementation*.

Table 4. Programming phase of CPM

	Activities	Activity code	Immediate predecessor	Time (days)
3rd phase: Programming (13–20)				
13	Selection of the appropriate communication process (Morrison model: promotion)	M	L	10
14	Organising the focus group analysis (internal environment – phase A – 4 groups) (Morrison model: programming)	N	L	5
15	Organising the focus group analysis (external environment – phase B – 4 groups) (Morrison model: programming)	O	L, N	5
16	Creation of the appropriate questionnaire (Morrison model: programming)	P	N, O	5

Activities		Activity code	Immediate predecessor	Time (days)
17	Creation of a mini advertising and public relations plan (Morrison model: promotion)	Q	P	10
18	Positioning of the culture and business packages to distributors	R	N, O, P	15
19	Creation of a guide-mini seminar to the participant groups and the selected distributors	S	R	5
20	Group executives meeting 2	T	S	5
End of the second phase				60

Source: authors' elaboration.

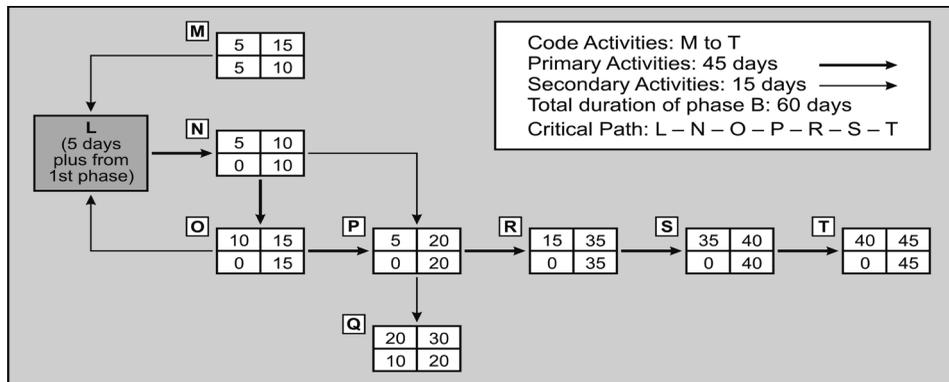


Fig. 4. Critical path diagram of the 2st phase

Source: authors' elaboration

Implementation phase (table 5, figure 5) is the executive part of the overall project and therefore it requires more actions and time. During this phase several actions are developed which are planned in the previous phase. For this reason, it lasts longer than the others, that is to say 175 days (100 primary and 75 secondary actions). The main feature of *Implementation* is that almost all actions are associated with the promotion of Rostock's image in continuous and repetitive initiatives such as advertising, participation in various events at national and European level, public relations programme, media etc. Actually, during this phase tactical planning is developed (McClamroch *et al.*, 2001; Petrakos *et al.*, 2004), because it includes the implementing of actions throughout the implementation process.

Table 5. Implementation phase of CPM

	Activities	Activity code	Immediate predecessor	Time (days)
3 rd phase: Implementation (21–36)				
21	Implementation of focus group analysis [internal environment]	U	T	5
22	Implementation of focus group analysis [external environment]	V	T	5
23	Primary market research (using questionnaire)	W	T	25
24	Creating or improving Web Site (Morrison model: promotion)	X	T	10
25	Advertising action 1: Media (Morrison model: promotion)	Y	X	10 (creating scenarios)
27	Advertising action 3: Newspaper (Morrison model: promotion)	AA	Y	10 (creating scenarios)
28	Advertising action 4: Magazines (2) [foreign] (Morrison model: promotion)	AB	Z	10 (creating scenarios)
29	Participation in an event (i.e. exhibition) [national level] (Morrison model: promotion)	AC	Z, AA, AB	10
30	Participation in an event (i.e. exhibition) [European level] (Morrison model: promotion)	AD	AC	15
31	Implementation of P/R activities (Morrison model: promotion)	AE	AD	10
32	Participation in a TV programme – documenter (Morrison model: promotion)	AF	AD	15 (creating scenario)
33	Info kiosks and info centers (Morrison model: promotion)	AG	AF	15
34	Creation of VIDEO – DVDs (Morrison model: promotion)	AH	AF	10
35	Creation of Investment and Tourist guides (Morrison model: promotion)	AI	AF	10
36	Group executives meeting 3	AJ	AI	5
End of the third phase				175

Source: authors' elaboration.

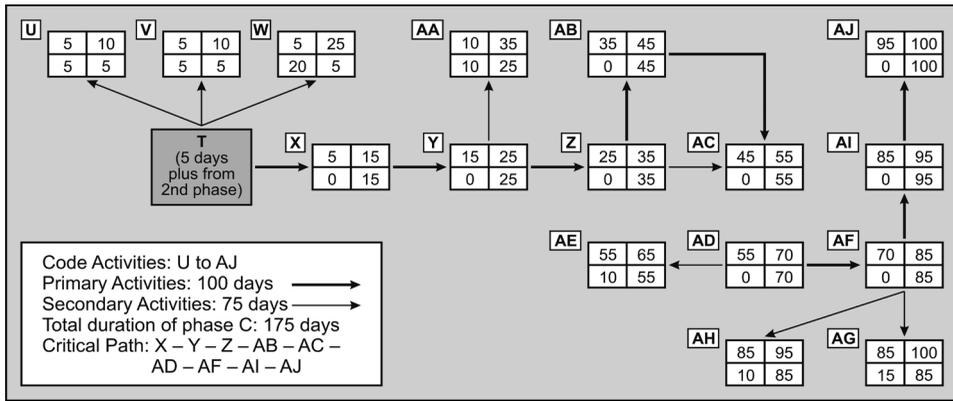


Fig. 5. Critical path diagram of the 3rd phase
Source: authors' elaboration

Feedback is the last phase. In this phase, during which the whole progress of the project ends, EMG is required to evaluate, support or reject the progress and the effectiveness of the actions that have taken place, particularly during the implementation phase (table 6, figure 6). In order to reach the final decisions, the data and the reports that have been collected will be evaluated, under the condition that firstly the appropriate databases are created. Based on this process, the experts and the decision-makers have the opportunity to possess organized and measurable important data so as to determine and plan the development of their areas in the future.

Table 6. Evaluation phase of CPM

4 th phase: <i>Evaluation and Feedback</i> (38–44)		Activity code	Immediate predecessor	Time (days)
38	Evaluation of the advertising and public relations plan	AK	AJ	5
39	Evaluation of the selected communication process	AL	AJ	5
40	Creation of a database	AM	AJ	5
41	Data analysis	AN	AM	10
42	Decision making analysis, based on the outcomes and the anticipated profits per action	AO	AN	10

Table 6 (cont.)

4 th phase: <i>Evaluation and Feedback</i> (38–44)		Activity code	Immediate predecessor	Time (days)
43	Final decisions	AP	AO	5
44	Preparation of the official programme (the level of its difficulty depends on the evaluation of the outcomes derived from pilot programme)	AQ	AP	10
	End of the 4th phase			55
	Whole project time horizon			410
	Primary actions			220
	Secondary (parallel to primary)			190

Source: authors' elaboration.

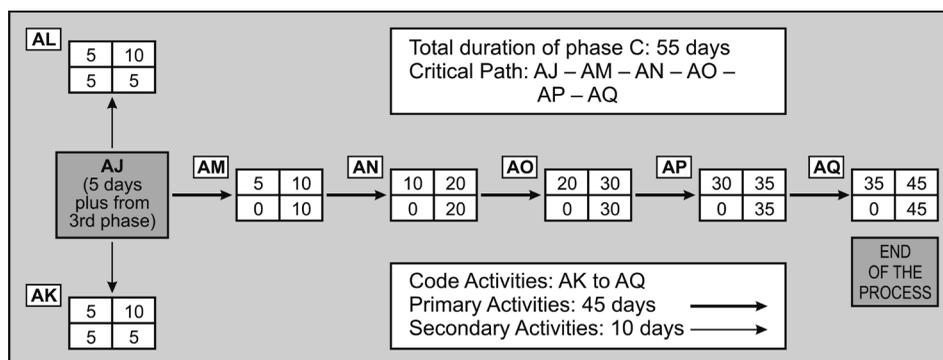


Fig. 6. Critical path diagram of the 4th phase

Source: authors' elaboration

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

CPA is based on the fact that planning and implementation of a Place Marketing Plan is a strategic process, characterized by specific phases, actions and evaluation methods, which are fitted and controlled in a specified time horizon. In this context, it can guarantee the successful implementation of place marketing thus providing the character of a *project*, during the progress and the completion of which there will be no randomness, procrastination and important omissions or errors.

However, in this study it is suggested that successful development of CPA is related to the capacity of EMG and its implementation by local decision-makers. The adoption of CPA has an innovative and pioneering character in Place Marketing process, supporting directly the effective contribution to the economic development of the region that applies it. Of course the whole proposal of CPA has a major limitation. The model of CPA does not take into account any of the contingencies of political, social, institutional and economic nature which affect strategic planning or policy-making in real life. This particular limitation will be a subject of future research.

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