Case Study
Reconstruction strategies after the Wenchuan Earthquake in Sichuan, China

Weiqiong Yang a,b, Daojie Wang b,* Guojie Chen b
a Southwestern University of Finance Economics, Chengdu, China
b Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards & Environment, Chinese Academy of Science, Chengdu, China

Abstract
An intensive earthquake, the Wenchuan Earthquake of 8.0 on the Richter scale, struck western Sichuan, China on May 12, 2008. The earthquake significantly affected all industries in the quake-hit areas including local tourism. This paper provides suggestions for reconstruction after outlining findings on the various ways by which the earthquake affected the operations and viability of tourism in the quake-hit areas. This paper is divided into 3 main parts. The first discusses the importance of tourism in the quake-hit areas. The second analyses the impact of the earthquake on tourism in Sichuan from different perspectives. The third is to propose strategies for tourism reconstruction.

1. Introduction
An intensive earthquake, the Wenchuan Earthquake measured at 8.0 on the Richter scale, struck Western Sichuan, China, on May 12, 2008. Official figures confirmed 69,185 dead, including 68,636 in Sichuan province, 374,171 injured and 184,671 listed as missing.1 Millions of people became homeless, large numbers of buildings were completely ruined, highways, water supply, sewage, gas and power systems were completely destroyed. The total economic loss was estimated at over ¥1000 billion.2

The Wenchuan Earthquake impacted an area of some 100,000 square kilometers and a population of 27,920,000 in 1204 towns of 71 counties in 11 prefectures. The quake zone involved a population of 7,000,000 in an area of 30,000 square kilometers covering 254 towns of 21 counties (cities), such as Beichuan, Wenchuan, Mianzhu, Qingchuan, Shifang, Dujiangyan, Pingwu, Anxian, Jiangyou, Pengzhou, Maoxian, Lixian, Chongzhou, Baoxing, Xiaojin, Heishui, Songpan, Dayi, Pixian, Wenjiang and Lushan as shown in Fig. 1.3

The earthquake significantly affected all industries in the quake-hit areas, including local tourism. There is comparatively little literature dealing with the impacts of earthquake upon tourism. Mazzocchi and Montini (2001) and Huang and Min (2002) based their analyses on post-quake restoration statistics. The objective of this paper is to suggest policies for reconstruction after outlining findings about the various ways in which the earthquake affected the operations and viability of tourism in the quake-hit areas.

2. Methodology and data
2.1. Methodology
Linear regression and empirical forecasting are jointly adopted in this paper to predict the economic loss caused by the earthquake. The initial linear regression prediction is based on the assumption that the tourism economy develops in a linear manner. Forecasting is employed to predict future tourism by means of a summary of experiences, and the average growth of the past few years is regarded as the normal rate. Though these methods have obvious flaws, the results possess importance as being indicative of the potential of tourism as a means of economic recovery for the region.

This paper mainly uses the data issued by the government and publications supplemented by information derived from the Internet.

3. The importance of tourism in the quake-hit areas
In 2007 Sichuan’s tourism revenue reached 121.73 billion RMB while that in 2000 was only 25.8 billion RMB. Annual revenues have increased by 24.3 percent and tourism revenue accounted for 6.4 percent of the total GDP in Sichuan in 2000 and 11.6 percent in

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2 The Direct Economic Loss Caused by Wenchuan is over ¥1000 billion, 2008-7-02. (http://news.xinhuanet.com/local/2008-07/02/content_8471901.htm).
38 percent of all provincial tourist arrivals (see Tables 2 and 38).

in 2007, the number of tourists in the quake-hit areas accounted for

3.2. Number of tourists

Data held by the Tourism Bureau of Sichuan Province show that in 2007, the number of tourists in the quake-hit areas accounted for 38 percent of all provincial tourist arrivals (see Tables 2 and 38).

6 Sichuan is abundant in tourism resources, with 5 sites on the

7 World Heritage List, 4 nature reserves in the Man and Biosphere

Resource Network of UNESCO (world nature reserve), 2 world geo-

8 World Heritage List, 4 nature reserves in the Man and Biosphere

3.3. Tourism revenue

Aggregate tourist expenditure data has to be used because of the

4 Tourism Revenue Reaches 100 Billion in 2007, singtaonet.com, 2008-1-23.


7 Statistical Bureau of Sichuan and NBS Survey Office in Sichuan, List of main

3.1. Tourism resources

Sichuan is abundant in tourism resources, with 5 sites on the

World Heritage List, 4 nature reserves in the Man and Biosphere

Reserve Network of UNESCO (world nature reserve), 2 world geo-

parks, 4 world scenic spots, 15 national scenic spots, 22 national

nature reserves, 31 national forest parks, 8 national geoparks, 128

national key units of cultural relics conservation, 7 cities of historical

and cultural relics in China, 8 types (27 subtypes) of intangible

cultural heritages and 18 excellent cities for tourism in China.5–7

There are 3 sites of world heritage, 2 world nature reserves, 2

world scenic spots, 6 national scenic spots, 8 national nature

reserves, 8 national forest parks and 3 national geoparks in the

quake-hit areas as shown in Table 1 (Fig. 2).

3.2. Number of tourists

Data held by the Tourism Bureau of Sichuan Province show that

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7 China ‘quake lake’ to be tourist spot, Yahoo.com, 2008-6-24. (http://news.
yahoo.com/s/ap/20080624/ap_on_re_as/china_quake_lake_1).
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