



Alicante, Spain & Virtual event

Urban Challenges and Sustainable Technological Revolution



Special Session Proposal

The role of participatory approaches in tourism and sustainable development

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Abstract

Participatory approaches and models are widely accepted as a criterion for sustainable tourism, as it helps decision-makers maintain traditional lifestyles and respect community values. In addition, participatory models are useful in developing the image and brand of the tourism destination and increasing its competition by providing better customer services or generating innovation or innovative tools in tourism. Participatory models tend to move away from top-down one-way decision-making to balance the power between all parties to promote a win-win situation in tourism development (see, e.g., Ozcevik et al., 2010; Wang, Fesenmaier, 2007; Cater, 1994; Wild, 1994; Murphy 1985; Arnstein, 1969). The participatory approach and its models help implement Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, namely Goals 8, 11, 12, and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable cities and communities, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable use of oceans and marine resources.

Robson and Robson (1996) asserted that “the participation of stakeholders in tourism has the potential to provide a framework within which sustainable tourism development can be achieved” by striking a balance between those who have the traditional power (those who possess money, knowledge and control, such as governments, investors, and outside experts) and those who have to live with the outcome of the development project (the host community) (Vijayanand 2013). Once the power relation is balanced and each stakeholder has the opportunity to express opinions in decision-making, tourism development will be more fully developed, fair,

and ultimately sustainable. Training and sharing good practices is an important factor for the successful implementation of the initiatives.

The INCULTUM project is based on a participatory approach where local communities and stakeholders play a direct and important role in the implementation of pilot actions. The ratio behind their involvement is to promote a positive impact of participatory models and avoid the negative effects of tourism on social relationships, local cultural heritage, or landscape preservation. The adoption of this approach is supported by a constantly updated training portal, embedded in the general project's website, where the concrete actions carried out by the pilots are reported and documented as a mean of inspiration and re-use by the others interested parties.

This special session aims to empower the discussion on the role of participatory approaches in tourism and sustainable development, both from a theoretical and empirical perspective.

The contributions should be focused, but not limited to: identification of different types of participatory models and approaches in tourism and sustainable development; drivers and barriers that account for the success or failure of participatory models; outcomes of participatory models that are based the on co-creation of innovative tools in relation to the expected benefits for the involved stakeholders; policy-oriented contributions on synergies between participatory models and innovative tool arrangements.