



Special Session Proposal

Special Session Title

“Looking to Tourism Industry as a Potential Contributor to the Development of Protected Areas: Approaching it from the Demand and the Supply Sides”

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Abstract

The growing interest in visiting Protected Areas (PAs) has transformed these areas in important and popular nature-based tourism destinations. However, increased public visits can significantly impact those areas and turn harder their management. These impacts may affect these areas in different ways, given that some PAs have great notoriety and have established successful sustainable tourism models, while others are absent from the tourist market and in many cases are underfunded, poorly managed, and ecologically damaged.

Motivation can be seen as a driving force that impel individuals to act, which is produced by a state of tension resulting from unfulfilled needs and is at the basis of the decision-making process. Motivations are considered a key concept in the study of visitors' behaviour, as they are behind all actions. Besides, it is well known that individuals respond differently to stimuli and engage in tourism activities for different reasons and purposes. Thus, motivation and tourists profile analyses are critical to generate better experiences while ensuring PAs sustainability.

By another side, community engagement and support are also essential elements for ensuring the long-term success of sustainable tourism development, environmental conservation, and the overall sustainability and development of territories. From both short and long-term perspectives, for destinations to achieve success and sustainability, the tourism industry must generate economic and social benefits for local residents without endangering the communities' social and cultural heritage or the quality of the destination's natural environment. Consequently, the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism destinations depend significantly on their ability to improve the well-being of stakeholders, including residents, while preserving endogenous resources.

Potential topics to approach in this special section are:

- Protected areas visitors' motivations and profiles;
- Community support and long-term success of tourism development, environmental conservation and overall sustainability of protected areas;
- Environmental, economic, and social impacts of tourism on protected areas destinations;
- New governance models for PAs;
- Visitors' satisfaction and loyalty towards protected areas;
- The role of non-massified tourism products in PAs tourist development;
- Climate change and sustainable destinations;
- Conceptual approaches to more sustainable forms of tourism.