

CIT 2013
Papers and Proceedings

Preface

One year ago, Florida Universitaria, based in Valencia (Spain), began the arrangements for the *International Conference on Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality* (CIT 2013), supported by the European Network for Business Studies and Languages (SPACE) and The Ulysses Foundation—a worldwide knowledge management network for tourism. The conference was subsequently held on 16-19 April 2013 in Valencia, with over 200 professionals, academics, and public officials present.

This was not the first time that a high level meeting on tourism innovation had been convened, but it was indeed one of the few occasions where a real dialogue between *thinkers* and *doers* was programmed and implemented. The conference combined keynote speeches, lectures, panel discussions, and presentations of case studies and best practices. Innovation in tourism and hospitality was addressed from two vantage perspectives: “Strategy and Governance in Tourism Destinations” and “Markets, Products and Management”.

The former perspective is of special importance for governments at all levels, as well as for business organizations and civil society. Destinations (tourism clusters in the Porterian sense) are the relevant spatial-institutional units for action. Tourism policy and governance paradigms may be discussed and advanced at a European Union or State level; however, competitiveness, sustainability and development programmes ultimately succeed or fail at the regional/municipal destination level.

Tourism policy practices in the last decades warn against excessive regulation or total *laissez-faire*. Destinations differ greatly in their resources and capabilities, be these in natural, physical, financial, or human and social-institutional capital. At the same time, it would be ill-advised to ignore theoretical advances and benchmarking experiences elsewhere. All these, together with the fact that tourism inherently presents both positive and negative direct effects and externalities (contributing to incomes, job creation and progress, but also impacting the natural and cultural environment), implies a need to use knowledge management instruments (research, education, and innovation) in order to build optimal frameworks for action that can be properly adjusted to specific scenarios and communities.

The case for markets, products, and enterprise management presents similar threats and opportunities. Private decision-makers value favourable environments with reasonable norms and ease of access to human, financial, and other capital resources. Knowledge and innovation have become the most sought-after of these resources, and tourism has arrived to an age of maturity where proactive collaboration with universities, research centres, and other knowledge institutions is imperative.

It is in this context that the Valencia *CIT 2013 Conference* acquires great importance. The goals of the conference—to provide meaningful exchanges in the theory and practice of tourism, to deal with the issues of tourism for development in destinations, and to specifically foster the role of innovation and knowledge management in enterprises and tourism clusters— are praiseworthy and very much in line with European tourism policy. So are the results, presented in this volume of *CIT 2013 Papers and Proceedings*, edited by Dr Eduardo Fayos-Solà, Dr Mercedes Aznar, Ms Victoria Gómez, and Ms Inma Mora, and published by the academic journal *Papers de Turisme*. The editors and authors of the volume contribute to a most needed call for reflections on the new tourism policy and governance paradigm, where European destinations, entrepreneurs, and civil society can shift gears in favour of *using tourism as an instrument for development*.

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