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As advocates of a fascinating research context and an applied discipline, tourism and hospitality, scholars are developing unique concepts to explain travel-related phenomena and are on the lookout for new theories and theoretical frameworks from other disciplines that help them make sense of the shifts and swings in market behavior. The focus of this special issue, the business model concept, is part of the latter category and aligns with *Tourism Review's* aspiration to advance our understanding of tourism value creation from a multidisciplinary, holistic perspective.

The concept had started its ascend in the mid-to-late 1990s in the management sciences ([Zott et al., 2011](#)). In short, the business model is a comprehensive analytical framework to explain how specific actors (such as entrepreneurs, firms or collaborative networks) create, capture and disseminate value. As such, it seems to be an intuitive fit to address the erosion of perceived customer value as well as new forms of intermediation and competition threaten existing revenue models. All those challenges are relevant to tourism and hospitality. For example, price comparison and distribution platforms have shifted the power of established hospitality chains to capture margins per unit booked along their supply chains. Services such as Uber Eats and Deliveroo challenge the profitability and value offered of traditional fast food franchises. Yield management backend solution providers engage in a fierce optimization race driven by advances in machine learning to outpace alternative revenue management applications and increase their clients' revenue per available room. Health tourism is inspired by advances in rehabilitation robotics. And finally, some tourism organizations seem to start shifting their existing value proposition from information services and placing promotion in its broadest sense to a development platform for tourism entrepreneurship and new attractions.

The increase in academic interest for the business model concept has been paralleled in public discourse and industry practice. Newspaper articles and investor reports regularly reference the concept; corporate entrepreneurs and startup teams use different variants of business model frameworks for ideation and venture development; and Alexander Osterwalder's business model canvas is available in the business section of many airport bookstores.

However, the business model is much more than a visual consulting tool. It is sometimes mistaken for one because of both the prominence of [Osterwalder and Pigneur's \(2009\)](#) canvas and the evolution of studies on business models as a research program ([Lecocq et al., 2010](#)). Like any new, challenging concept developed in the management disciplines, the business model's conceptual boundaries have shifted and evolved into different streams of research ([Massa et al., 2017](#)) that are at times hard to identify from outside the research communities that drive the research agenda at its core. We content that this is, however, a necessity to unlock its potential for hospitality and tourism research.

With this special issue on business models in tourism and the review article "Business Models in Tourism: A review and research agenda" ([Reinhold et al., 2017](#)), we have attempted to start a conversation on where business model research in tourism stands and clarify some challenges and misconceptions in applying the business model concept as a theoretical lens to study tourism and hospitality research questions. As a guest editorial team, we unite those

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strands of research: tourism and hospitality research with business model research in strategy, entrepreneurship and organizational behaviour.

The collection of work presented in this special issue is representative of the relatively nascent state of business model research in tourism and hospitality and the challenges involved in this type of research. Following our call, in late 2016, we received 38 original manuscripts and extended abstracts. Of those, we invited 14 papers for the first round of reviews. Any submission coauthored by anyone of us guest editors was handled separately by the acting editor-in-chief to ensure the integrity of the double-blind review process. After a second round of reviews, we selected four contributions to feature in this special issue. We hope they serve as an inspiration on how to pick up on methodological challenges and research gaps to advance our understanding of a number of phenomena from a business model perspective in tourism and hospitality management and entrepreneurship.

This special issue is structured in two parts. The first part contains the introduction and two conceptual papers. In “Business models in tourism – state of the art,” we present a critical review of the state of business model research in tourism and hospitality that builds on our literature review published in *Tourism Review* Volume 72, Issue 4 (Reinhold *et al.*, 2017). It contextualizes our findings in the broader landscape of scholarly discourse on business models.

We hope it serves tourism and hospitality researchers as a point of orientation in navigating the body of knowledge on the business model concept within and outside their discipline.

In “A business model typology for destination management organizations,” Stephan Reinhold, Pietro Beritelli and Rouven Grünig argue that DMOs face challenges that simultaneously question how those organizations create and capture value. The authors use typological reasoning to propose four DMO business model ideal types. Those four ideal types relate to decision-makers’ assumptions about the perceived level of control a DMO has over a destination and how tourism organizations create and capture value.

In “Game on! A new integrated resort business model,” Aaron Tham and Danny Huang make their case for a new integrated resort business model that benefits from conceptual integration of smart tourism ecosystems with dynamic capabilities. The authors argue in their conceptual contribution that their approach to business model development in information-rich environments can help realize sustainable competitive advantage.

The second part contains two empirical case studies that use the business model as a conceptual lens to study relevant tourism issues from a cross-sectional perspective. They are both interesting from a research perspective as well as for those that look for inspiration on how to make the business model concept tangible in tourism settings for their teaching. In “Jumia travel in Africa: expanding the boundaries of the OTA business model,” Maxime Weigert illustrates how constraints on demand and supply in a developing sub-Saharan African travel market have shaped the local adoption of the OTA business model. The author illustrates that the experience of Jumia Travel in Côte d’Ivoire is an example of dynamic capabilities at work that enabled a local venture to develop new business routines and acquire new competencies to implement the OTA business model locally in a bottom of the pyramid market.

Finally, in “An examination of a social tourism business in Granada, Nicaragua,” Alexia Francidis demonstrates how tourism businesses can pursue a dual agenda with a social business model. The author focuses on value dissemination among stakeholders in a local community with an organizational support model.

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special issue and, finally, to all authors for sharing their contributions in this special issue to inspire a conversation on business models in tourism.

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