

An internet search on the impact of climate change on skiing and Alpine tourism yields a pessimistic view of the future. A UK national newspaper article headline in February 2017 illustrates this: “Climate change research predicts 70 per cent less snow in Alpine ski resorts by 2099”. Given the changes that are occurring, what can be done to preserve Alpine tourism? As part of a response, theme editors Chiara Mauri and Raphaël Dornier draw on the outcomes of a conference held in June 2017, and this authoritative, multidisciplinary research-based issue offers an array of solutions. *WHATT* does not publish empirical work unless it involves dialogue with industry practitioners about the implications. I should like to thank Chiara and Raphaël and their writing team for taking this extra step and for their efforts to sustain collaboration between researchers and practitioners. This issue presents the main challenges and possible solutions for sustainable tourism development in the Alps, together with some of the wider implications for mountain tourism.

*WHATT* aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development, and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a *WHATT* theme editor, do please contact me.

**Richard Teare**  
*Managing Editor, WHATT*

## **Tourism sustainability in the Alpine region: what are the major trends and challenges?**

The Alps have experienced near constant growth in tourism during the past few decades and, with that, increasing tourist flows and infrastructures. This development started well before the birth of a collective consciousness about the necessity to limit the negative impact of tourism. Originally based mostly on skiing, tourism in the Alps is becoming more diversified, with a desire to benefit from a regular flow of tourists during the whole year and to cope with climate change. As the Alpine space crosses eight countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland), the issue of international governance of this vast territory is a crucial one. Therefore, the issue of tourism sustainability in the Alps requires different perspectives at different levels to derive a deeper understanding of its various dimensions.

The articles published in this theme issue were presented at a conference in Courmayeur in June 2017, funded by and part of the Interreg V-A France-Italie ALCOTRA named FEAST (« Formation, Education et Aménagement des Synergies Territoriales ») project. The main question arising and which forms the backdrop to this theme issue relates to the trends that are emerging in the Alpine space and their sustainability. These changes have an impact not only on the tourism industry but also, in a more general way, on local development. New trends also relate to changes in consumer behavior as increasing numbers of tourists do not holiday in mountain resorts for skiing but to experience other activities. A better understanding of tourist behavior will therefore enable local organizations to provide a more suitable offer and implement the necessary changes. The most serious long-term trend is climate change – in some cases, ski resorts have no other option but to diversify their activities – including during the winter season. Some low-altitude villages that were once ski resorts have already abandoned their skiing infrastructure and are investing in activities that do not depend on snow. We will therefore



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aim in this theme issue to consider the sustainability of new trends, with special reference to four dimensions of sustainable development and the specificities of the Alpine space. The theme issues outcomes will be further discussed at a conference to be held in June 2018 at Aosta in Italy. This conference will be also funded by the Interreg V-A France-Italie ALCOTRA named FEAST (« Formation, Education et Aménagement des Synergies Territoriales ») project.

We hope that you will find this theme issue thought-provoking and informative, as it draws on a broad range of expertise in Alpine tourism.

**Chiara Mauri and Raphaël Dornier**  
*Theme Editors*

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### **About the Theme Editors**

Chiara Mauri is Professor of Business Economics at Università della Valle d'Aosta, Aosta, Italy, where she teaches courses in marketing, brand management and go-to-market strategies. She was the Director of the Department of Economics and Political Sciences for seven years (until December 2015) and is now Head of the Master of Science in Economics and Policies for Regional Development and Business ([c.mauri@univda.it](mailto:c.mauri@univda.it)). Chiara is also Adjunct Professor at Bocconi University and Senior Professor at SDA Bocconi School of Management, Milan, Italy, and has been the director of several master's programs. Chiara's recent research and publications embrace place branding and tourism marketing, brand experience and retailing.

Raphaël Dornier is Associate Professor in Business Policy and Strategy at Savoie Mont Blanc University in France. He teaches courses in marketing, international business, organizational theory and tourism management at bachelor and master levels. He is also the Head of the International Business track of the master's program on Foreign Languages Applied to Business at Savoie Mont Blanc University. His publications are mostly related to sustainable tourism, revenue management and cognitions on competition and strategic groups.