

Welcome to our sixth annual global trends issue, edited by Global Trends Editor, Dr Jorge Costa and his colleagues Celeste Varum, Mónica Montenegro and João Gomes. In order to examine and debate a topical strategic question, Jorge and the team from IPDT–Institute of Tourism, Portugal, convene one or more annual events that bring together industry executives, policymakers, academics and other specialists. As there are currently so many changes affecting the future of tourism (ranging from the ongoing pandemic and climate change to changing patterns of travel behaviour), new ways of conceptualising, operationalising and measuring tourism success are needed. To explore the implications arising from their analysis, the team aims to facilitate shared learning and collaboration between tourism industry sectors, which is a challenging task. I would like to thank Jorge, Celeste, Monica, João and all the contributors from academia and industry which this year includes expert insights from the Secretary of State for Tourism, Portugal and the President of the European Travel Commission. This topic area will be further explored at IPDT's November 2021 conference and at a global trends issue launch event in 2022.

Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (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

Measuring tourism success: Are we on the brink of a new paradigm?

By the end of 2019, tourism across the world had reached a new record in terms of international tourist arrivals. The economic impacts were very positive but the over-concentration of tourists in the main tourist destinations led to negative reactions from local residents. In response, destination management organisations started to devise strategies to deal with the negative impacts of tourism by developing new areas of interest for tourists and revising visit schedules for the most popular attractions.

At the beginning of 2020, things changed radically and instead of continued growth, tourism came to a halt as countries shut their borders to avoid the spread of the virus. The sudden and unanticipated changes that affected tourism destinations also coincided with changes in traveller behaviours and with the emergence of new segments and niches (generation Z, slow travellers, eco-travellers, digital nomads etc.). These developments are slowly changing the face of tourism and require a new approach to the development and offer of tourism products and experiences. Sustainability, co-creation and the circular economy (among others) are the new realities for companies and destinations as they strive to align with traveller expectations.

Given the major changes in markets and tourists' profiles, destinations must re-evaluate their traditional approach to measuring the performance and success of the tourism sector. In fact, the underlying question is whether destinations should continue to rely purely on tourism metrics such as 'tourist arrivals, RevPar and gross domestic product' as the main indicators of tourism success. It is our view that tourism success indicators must integrate with other aspects that allow for the development of responsible, inclusive and sustainable destinations, where residents' satisfaction with tourism assumes the same level of importance as the satisfaction of tourists with the experience.



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There is growing evidence that the impacts of tourism are not all beneficial to destinations and their residents, a situation that is currently being addressed by the main world tourism agencies who have started to promote alternative ways for the industry to adopt a more holistic approach to measuring the success of tourism destinations. This approach is also being adopted and promoted by some of the world's best tourism destinations, thus setting the scene for a new paradigm in measuring tourism success. We explore all of these developments in our annual global trends issue, and we hope that you will find our analysis informative and thought-provoking.

Jorge Costa
Global Trends Editor