

Human-Centred Island Futures: Internal Marketing, Resident Empowerment and Regenerative Tourism

Track Chair: Dr Vanessa GB Gowreesunkar, Indian Institute of Management Sirmaur (India)

A tourism destination is not only a location on the world map. It is rather a dynamic system of human-centred activities shaped and coordinated by multiple tourism stakeholders, nurturing compatible and conflicting interests. In the context of island destinations, residents, as island guardians, constitute critical stakeholders within the tourism system. Despite their important roles, they remain insufficiently recognised within tourism planning and governance structures. This is particularly paradoxical given that the tourism environment is, in most cases, inherently embedded within resident-owned spaces and lived communities, which are directly or indirectly transformed into key components of the tourism experience and the overall destination offering.

Island destinations are increasingly confronted by a range of human-induced pressures. Issues such as overtourism network coordination complexities, stakeholder management, governance deficiencies, geopolitical uncertainty, sustainability concerns, and rapidly changing social fabrics continue to reshape island tourism economies and destination dynamics. These interconnected human-centred processes profoundly influence how tourism destinations are developed, managed, safeguarded, and sustained over time. Accelerating digitalization, artificial intelligence, smart tourism infrastructures, and data-driven systems are transforming tourism ecosystems and stakeholder relationships at unprecedented speed. Island destinations are functioning as highly vulnerable tourism spaces and they are required to recognise this reality. There is therefore a growing need for island tourism systems to adopt more human-centered models of development that place internal stakeholders at the core of tourism planning, governance, resilience building, and regenerative transformation. Ultimately, the long-term sustainability and legitimacy of island tourism will depend upon the extent to which internal stakeholders are recognized, empowered, protected, and meaningfully integrated into destination futures. Grounded in internal marketing theory, stakeholder theory, service-dominant logic, socio-technical systems thinking, and regenerative tourism perspectives, this track advances a human-centered approach to tourism transformation. It conceptualizes island tourism destinations as interconnected socio-ecological systems where residents, employees, entrepreneurs, policy makers, visitors, and local communities function as active co-creators of tourism value and destination futures. Rather than positioning technology as an end in itself, the track critically examines how artificial intelligence, smart systems, immersive technologies, big data, and digital infrastructures can support human capability, community wellbeing, participatory governance, and regenerative outcomes.

Future tourism competitiveness increasingly depends on destinations' ability to strengthen internal stakeholder alignment, social cohesion, adaptive governance, and community resilience. In this context, internal marketing moves beyond employee-focused perspectives to include resident empowerment, stakeholder integration, trust-building, and shared value creation at the destination level. This is particularly important in island destinations, where ecological fragility and resource dependence make resident support and community wellbeing essential for long-term resilience and legitimacy.

The shift from sustainable to regenerative tourism further requires destinations to go beyond impact reduction and actively contribute to ecosystem restoration, cultural preservation, local economic strengthening, and improved community wellbeing. As a result, tourism futures must be understood not only through economic or technological progress, but through their capacity to generate inclusive, ethical, and human-centered development. We invite conceptual, empirical, methodological, and interdisciplinary papers and encourage cross-disciplinary approaches. Research may engage with island destinations specifically or address broader tourism contexts relevant to human-centred and regenerative futures. Developmental papers, comparative studies, policy-oriented contributions, and practitioner-scholar collaborations are also welcome.

Expanded Themes and Sub-Themes

1. Internal Stakeholders, Resident Engagement and Destination Governance

- Internal stakeholders in island tourism systems
- Resident support for tourism development
- Employee wellbeing and destination sustainability
- Resident participation in tourism planning and decision-making
- Stakeholder communication, trust-building and collaboration
- Resident-tourist relationships and social interactions
- Participatory governance and inclusive destination management
- Destination governance models and DMO roles

2. Smart Tourism, Digital Transformation and Human-Centered Technologies

- Artificial intelligence in tourism management
- Smart tourism destinations and ecosystem development
- Digital transformation in island tourism contexts
- Big data and destination intelligence systems
- Technology and community wellbeing outcomes
- Ethical implications of tourism technologies
- Human-centered applications of smart tourism systems

3. Regenerative, Sustainable and Resilient Island Tourism Systems

- Regenerative tourism practices and frameworks
- Sustainable tourism development in island destinations
- Community regeneration and local resilience building
- Circular economy approaches in tourism
- Climate adaptation and environmental vulnerability
- Tourism recovery and adaptive destination strategies
- Disaster preparedness and tourism system resilience
- Measuring regenerative and sustainability outcomes

4. Community Wellbeing, Social Sustainability and Inclusive Development

- Tourism and resident quality of life
- Social sustainability in island tourism contexts
- Community wellbeing and resilience under tourism pressure
- Overtourism and its social impacts
- Social inclusion and equity in tourism systems
- Tourism dependency and economic vulnerability
- Inclusive tourism value chains and development outcomes

5. Governance, Ethics, Entrepreneurship and Future Tourism Transformations

- Public-private-community partnerships in tourism governance
- Network-based destination management approaches
- Local entrepreneurship and community-based tourism
- Social entrepreneurship and inclusive tourism economies
- Ethics of artificial intelligence and data governance
- Privacy, surveillance and tourism data issues
- Political economy of tourism development
- Degrowth, post-growth and responsible tourism futures
- Human-centered tourism transformation and justice-oriented futures