

# Track: Workforce Transformation and Human Capital Development for Tourism 2040

## Track Chairs: Dr Quynh Nguyen and Professor Adele Ladkin

### Rationale and relevance to the conference theme

Tourism's transition toward smart and regenerative ecosystems requires a fundamental rethinking of how the sector attracts, develops, and sustains its workforce. Rapid advances in AI, automation, and data-driven technologies are reshaping service roles, altering skill requirements, and transforming how work is organised across the visitor economy. At the same time, regenerative tourism principles call for employment systems that prioritise wellbeing, fairness, resilience, and community value.

This track aligns with the conference theme "Tourism 2040: Human-centred Futures in Smart and Regenerative Ecosystems" by placing people - workers, managers, and communities - at the centre of tourism's future. It emphasises that human capital is not peripheral to digital transformation; it is foundational to ensuring that smart technologies and regenerative strategies deliver meaningful, equitable and sustainable outcomes.

This track welcomes tourism and hospitality scholars; researchers in workforce development, HRM, organisational behaviour, vocational education, and digital transformation; destination managers and policymakers; and industry leaders engaged in talent strategy and workforce planning.

This track advances understanding of how tourism can build a skilled, healthy, equitable, and future-ready workforce capable of thriving in smart and regenerative ecosystems. Contributions may offer theoretical developments, empirical evidence, policy insights, conceptual frameworks, and future-oriented scenarios that support human-centred transformation. By prioritising people, this track helps shape a research agenda that strengthens workforce resilience, enhances capability, and positions human capital as a driver of sustainable and regenerative Tourism 2040 futures.

### Key research questions and thematic focus

Submissions may examine topics including but not limited to:

#### Future Skills and Capabilities

- Attracting, retaining, and developing talent
- Global tourism and hospitality labour market
- Skills and competencies for AI-enabled and data-driven tourism
- Digital literacy, data analytics, and technology adoption
- Empowering co-creation across the ecosystem
- Capabilities required for sustainable and regenerative tourism
- Human-centric skills: creativity, empathy, and critical thinking
- Continuous learning, digital upskilling, and lifelong development
- Preparing future-ready tourism professionals
- Designing innovative and adaptive tourism curricula
- Vocational training and industry alignment
- Leadership development for a dynamic, resilient, and technology-driven tourism environment

#### Changing Nature of Work

- Hybrid human-technology workflows
- Impact of automation and robotics on jobs
- How AI and technology are reshaping job design and human value
- Human-technology collaboration and hybrid workflows
- Effects on employee experience and well-being
- Empowering productivity, innovation and creativity
- Uniquely human work and how organisations can support it
- Skills, reskilling, and workforce transformation in the digital era
- Changing organisational structures
- Management practices in technology-enabled workplaces
- Augmented work on job design and human value creation
- Hybrid human-technology workflows
- Tasks and forms of value co creation

#### Workforce Wellbeing, Inclusion, and Resilience

- Strategies to create healthy, inclusive, psychologically safe, and fair work environments
- Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Workforce resilience in the face of crisis, climate change, and technological disruption
- Supporting mental health, work-life balance, and employee wellbeing
- Building accessible and inclusive workforces for people with disabilities
- Leadership approaches that foster trust and engagement
- Developing inclusive organisational cultures
- Regenerative principles for workforce planning and HR strategies
- Empowering employees through participation and meaningful work
- Measuring social sustainability and
- Managing employee well-being outcomes

#### Governance, Leadership, and Talent Ecosystems

- Policy frameworks and industry partnerships
- Talent development and mobility
- Collaboration between government, industry, and academia
- Empowering workforce innovation
- Leadership for diverse, inclusive, and regenerative workforce
- Organisational cultures for adaptability, learning, and innovation
- Building strong, inclusive, and future-oriented talent pipelines
- Talent development at local, regional, and national levels
- Governance models for managing skills gaps
- Empowering workforce transitions
- Strategic alignment between education and industry needs