BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
13th - 14th October 2023

ISSUES OF HOUSING, PLANNING, AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY
Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives

Issues of Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives

Conference Theme and Rationale

Albania, along with other Western Balkan countries, has undergone significant economic, social, and political changes in recent years. As a result, housing, planning, and the resilient management of territorial development have emerged as critical issues. This is because these regions face significant challenges in providing affordable housing, addressing the impact of urbanization on the environment, fostering evidence-based decision-making on the territory, and bringing forth the commitments towards climate neutrality.

The organizers use the term "multi-modality" to define complex situations (in matters of territorial planning, management, architecture, housing, public space, technology, etc.) that have historically encompassed Western Balkans and Mediterranean cities in a logic of coexistence and value co-creation. A combination of knowledge and heritage that throughout time and history have given life to civilization in this region of Europe. The active involvement of Albania in the existing network of the Mediterranean Basin and the EU, through a joint action plan with UN / UNECE, and the Albanian and regional authorities, including reputable scientific bodies such as the Academy of Sciences of Albania, makes this conference even more intriguing to explore fascinating areas of research. The conclusions, to be considered as a stage for open innovation, will include recommendations for further scientific and applied research, projects, and events.

The geographical focus of the conference covers three dimensions: i) Albania; ii) the Western Balkans; iii) Euro-Mediterranean countries. POLIS University aims to focus on the above-mentioned research areas that are of common interest to both Western Balkans and Mediterranean cities, including, but not limited to: housing policies, urban history and architecture typology, innovation and digitalization in urbanism, energy efficiency, resilience and environmental sustainability, governance and smart technologies for city management, education and gender aspects in urban planning research.

In this regard the main aim of this international conference is to bring together scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to examine the pressing issues of housing, planning, and land development in these regions, in a context of transition fatigue, climate challenges and post-pandemic realities.

Issues of Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives

Conference Aim

The main aim of this international conference is to bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to examine the urgent issues of housing, planning and land development in these regions, in a context of transition, climate challenges and post-pandemic realities.

Objective

-Consolidation of the cooperation network between Albanian and non-Albanian researchers, lecturers, managers, with the aim of participating in joint research projects at the regional and international level;
-Support of local authorities with contemporary data, on the state of housing issues, planning and sustainable urban and environmental management, as well as representatives of public and private institutions operating in this field.

The conference is organized by POLIS University (U_POLIS) in cooperation with the Academy of Science of Albania, and supported by other local and international partners.
 In the framework of resilience, the main conference theme is devoted to Issues of Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory from a Euro-Mediterranean Perspective, including Albania, Western Balkans and the Mediterranean Basin. This event aims to bring together academics, policymakers, researchers, experts, practitioners, and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to discuss and address critical challenges related to housing, urban planning, and the development of resilient territories.

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MANAGEMENT, TECHNOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY

PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

The Smart Tourist Spanish Destination Program Critical Success Factors

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Abstract

Smart Tourist Destinations (STD) are innovative tourist destinations highly enabled by technological infrastructures, aimed to assure the sustainable development of tourism, allowing full accessibility, and making easier for visitors to interact with elements in destination. Literature review evidence shows how these destinations apart from increasing the quality of tourists' experiences at destinations, improve the quality of life among residents. In the last decade, a great investment has been done in the creation and maintenance of STD. Spain is the second world power in tourism, and it has recently put into action the STD Program. This program is oriented to develop a management model of tourism that includes different dimensions: governance, innovation, technology, sustainability, and accessibility oriented to create and preserve STD. It is supported by a method concerned with providing recommendations, action plans and a system to monitor final outcomes. In this paper, the Spanish STD Program is described, and a case of success is presented, focusing on the main benefits of the method such as the fact that it is a powerful tool to prioritize some innovative actions, the achievement of greater competitiveness because of a rational use of tourism resources, the improvement in the quality of stay of visitors and the increase in terms of residents' quality of life. Long term positive impacts in the environmental areas are also analysed from a sustainable perspective.

Keywords
Smart Tourist Destination, governance, innovation, technology, accessibility, sustainability

Introduction

The Smart Tourism Destination (STD) is an emerging paradigm for optimizing the use of touristic resources, enhancing tourism experiences, increasing destination competitiveness, and improving residents' quality of life [1]. The scientific debate developed since 2015 is rooted on the application mutatis mutandis of the concept of smart city and its main features to the tourism domain [2]. Today, the concept of STD is directly linked to that of smart city where sustainability is the main strategic aim of the tourism planning process [3]. A growing number of academic studies have been attempting to analyse empirically the technological and business foundation of this concept [4].

As claimed by [5], the STD concept is the result of two converging trends: on the one hand eTourism [6], [7], [8] and on the other hand, the opportunities generated by the adoption of the smart city paradigm to optimize the use of tourist resources, enhance tourist experiences, increase the competitiveness of destinations and improve the quality of life of residents [9].

The STD is built on a shared platform of state-of-the-art technologies that integrates information on tourism businesses and use of resources; interconnects dynamically all the stakeholders to share relevant knowledge; manages big data and data analytics tools for decision-making and tourism experience co-creation [10], [11], [12].

The following characteristics are necessary for smart tourism: integrated technological environments, responsive micro- and macrolevel processes, end-user devices, and stakeholders that actively utilise smart digital platforms [13].

To increase the competitiveness of destinations it is necessary to connect stakeholders dynamically allowing that the instantaneous exchange of information and accessibility is guaranteed from a variety of end user devices. The emphasis is mainly on the so-called "smart tourism experiences" [14]. The connected tourist interacts, participates, and shares more easily, increasing the co-creation level of the tourism product and adding new value for all [15], [16], [17]. Moreover, the intensive use of technological infrastructure enhances the consumer perspective, improving the tourist experience of visitors in terms of co-creation and customization [18].

Despite the numerous theoretical contributions on smart destination, it is still an emerging topic in the literature that requires the combination of knowledge from different disciplines [18] not only from information systems, tourism management, marketing, urban planning, destination management and governance but also from data processing and analysis. Moreover, there are no studies that propose a process model providing an operational path for transforming a destination into a smart destination and that suggest best practices to ensure its sustainable management [19]. This study was therefore carried out to contribute filling this research gap by presenting Spanish´s Smart Tourist Destination program as well as a case study in Spain: the Valencia region, which capital city, Valencia was elected European Smart Capital in 2022.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. To begin with Spanish Smart Tourist Destination Program is presented. After that, the paper describes the case of Valencia Region as a benchmark in STD. Finally, conclusions, limitations, and future research lines are suggested.

Smart Tourist Destination Program

The Smart Tourism Destination Program (STDP) is a Spanish Government Initiative, started in 2012, within the 2012-2015 National Integral Spanish Plan for Tourism (PNIT), promoted by the Spanish Secretary of State for Tourism (SETUR) and managed by the State Society for the Management of Innovation and Tourism Technologies (SEGITTUR). Its main objective is to help make tourist destinations more competitive and improve the quality of life of their residents by focusing on five key areas of action: governance, innovation, technology, sustainability and ac-

cessibility [20]. It also seeks to create a homogeneous framework that establishes the minimum requirements to classify tourist destinations as "Smart Destinations" (SD).

The STDP ranks tourist destinations as innovative ones based on a state-of-the-art technological infrastructure, thus guaranteeing the sustainable development, being accessible to anyone, enabling visitors to integrate and interact with their surroundings, raising the quality of their experience at the destination, and improving quality of life among residents [16] [20].

STDP seeks to implement a management model that considers the cross-cutting nature of tourist activity and the differentiating characteristics and features of each destination. It relies on a diagnostic methodology, which leads to a set of recommendations, an action plan and a monitoring system, thus facilitating a process of continuous improvement, tailored to the present and future challenges of the tourism industry [20].

From the practical perspective, the SPTD counts on with a tool to support destinations that have compromised to implement the Intelligent Tourism Destination (ITD) diagnosis and action plan. The Network of Smart Tourism Destinations enables synergies and knowledge transfer, maximizing the benefits of the ITD model. Normalization is key to work in the most objective possible way towards an increasing level of "intelligence" of the destination. The Spanish Standardisation Association (AENOR) has published some innovative standards that will contribute to the positioning and global recognition of an ITD: Standard UNE 178501:2018 Management system for smart destinations, Standard UNE 178502:2018 Indicators and tools for smart tourism destinations, and Standard UNE 178503 Smart Tourist Destinations. Semantics applied to tourism. The methodology to become an ITD works around a lifecycle composed by 2 cycles and 5 phases (Figure 1):

Figure 1: Smart Tourist Destination lifecycle / Source: Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (2023)

Cycle 1, Diagnosis and planning, starts with a diagnosis request from the destination, which undertakes to implement the Smart Tourist Destination action plan and formalise its membership in the Smart Tourist Destinations Network. Once that the acceptance has taken place, the Diagnostic Phase (Phase 2) starts with the main objective of initiating the recognition of the destiny as a STD. In this phase 97 requirements and 261 indicators are measured to analyse the degree of maturity

of the destination. A list of recommendations is also generated oriented to draw up an action plan. The third phase 3, Strategy and Planning, starts the process for implementing the actions aligned with the recommendations established in the previous phase. They are scheduled according to identified priorities and through the involvement of those responsible, including investment needs. Once these phases have been completed, the destination can be recognized as a Smart Destination by achieving a degree of compliance equal to or higher than 80% of the requirements. If it falls short of this percentage, it will qualify as an Affiliate Smart Tourist Destination. In both cases, the process follows in cycle 2, Implementation and Monitoring. Those destinations that have obtained a score in the degree of compliance with the requirements of the ITD methodology, equal to or greater than 80%, are recognized with the STD badge. In these cases, the destinations start a process of continuous improvement during two years. In this time, destinations are expected to working continuously to improve in terms of tourist quality.

Cycle 2. Implementation and monitoring. During this cycle, the action plan is implemented and the accreditation undergoes regular monitoring and renewal. In this cycle, Associated Smart Tourist Destinations move to phase 4 and proceed to implement the proposed actions. Once the Action Plan has been put in place and the necessary degree of compliance has been achieved, they will get the Smart Tourist Destination accreditation, thus moving on to Phase 5 – Renewal. This last phasetakes place every two years to validate compliance with all Smart Tourist Destination requirements and indicators.

Below, a summary of the national and international destinations that have completed the diagnostic process following the ITD methodology are enumerated (Table 1).

Once the Spanish STD Program has been presented in the next section, we will describe one of the most successful initiatives that have been developed at the regional level in the country so far.

Valencia Region: a case of success in the implementation of the ITD Model
The Valencia Region is located in the East of Spain, bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, divided into three provinces: Castellón, Valencia and Alicante. Its climate with winters of temperatures around 11 and summers around 25 Celsius degrees make the region a striking area for sun and beach tourism and, although this type of tourism is the most exploited there, we also find rural tourism, mountain and hiking trails in the inland areas of Castellon, business tourism, festivals, concerts and congresses, and cruise tourism, mainly located in the city of Valencia. Valencia region generates 9.6% of the national GDP [21]. Valencia was awarded as European Capital of Intelligent Tourism in 2022 [22] and it will become Green European Capital in 2024 [23].
Valencia joined the ITD Network in 2019, and got the ITD mention in 2022. Environmental, social and economic sustainability are at the heart of a tourism strategy designed to become an ITD [20].
It established the Network of Intelligent Tourist Destinations Valencia (Network ITD-CV), as an union of destinations created to start a collaborative learning environment. Promoting the collaboration amongst members to push the digitization of tourism activity as an instrument that serves efficiency and effectiveness in tourism management, the structuring, implementation of the ITD-CV model and preventing the digital rupture between rural and urban destinations are amongst the main short term actions in this network.
Following, the different actions taken in the Valencia Region for each of the five dimensions of the

Destination	Year of first evaluation
International destinations	destinations and years of first evaluation
Asunción (Paraguay)	2023
Bogota (Colombia)	2021
Medellin (Colombia)	2020
Montevideo (Uruguay)	2023
Santiago de Cali (Colombia)	2022
Tequila (México)	2020
National destinations (per regions)	destinations and years of first evaluation
Andalucia	23 destinations from 2019 to 2022
Aragón	4 destinations from 2019 to 2022
Canary Islands	7 destinations from 2019 to 2020
Cantabria	2 destinations in 2019
Castilla-La Mancha	3 destinations from 2019 to 2020
Castilla-Leon	9 destinations from 2019 to 2022
Cataluña	10 destinations from 2019 to 2022
Ceuta	1 destination in 2021
Navarra	2 destinations from 2019 to 2022
Madrid	6 destinations from 2019 to 2022
Valencia	4 destinations in 2019
Extremadura	9 destinations from 2018 to 2023
Balear Islands	3 destinations from 2019 to 2020
La Rioja	1 destination in 2021
Basque Country	5 destinations from 2019 to 2022
Asturias	4 destinations from 2019 to 2020
Murcia	6 destinations from 2019 to 2022

Table 1: International and national destinations evaluated under the ITD methodology / Source: Data extracted from the ITD main web page https://www.destinosinteligentes.es/destinos-inteligentes/, 10th August, 2023

ITD Model are presented.

Governance dimension

Governance refers to a government practice that can be measured and it is oriented to effectively manage the tourism sector at different levels of government through efficient, transparent and accountable forms of coordination, collaboration and cooperation, to achieve the goals of collective interest shared by the networks of actors that influence the sector, in order to achieve solutions and opportunities, based on agreements focused on the recognition of interdependencies and shared responsibilities [24] [25].

The Valencia Region includes this aspect of governance both in Law 15/2018, of 7 June, on tourism, leisure and hospitality and in the White Paper on Tourism of the Valencia Region [26] on a

more operational basis, which contains the different tourism governance and revitalization plans and the ITD master plans, among other planning resources. The proposals in the White Paper fall into three areas: the territory and tourist destinations, tourism organisations and competition, and tourism markets and products [27].

Sustainability dimension
The development of tourism activities in the Valencia Region has historically stimulated an intense process of urbanization in coastal areas, with different levels of intensity (human tension in the territory) and different modes of occupation. In this situation, the evolution of sustainable tourism exceeds the policies of the tourism sector and is directly related to different regional and departmental policies. The spatial planning policy determines the territorial model at regional level through the Territorial Strategy of the Valencia Region including objectives related to tourism activities: to restore the coasts as a territorial resource, promoting the tourism model towards sustainable land use schemes. Territorial policy tools, particularly territorial and sectoral plans, impact in the organization of the tourist territory: the Territorial Action Plan of the Coastal Green Infrastructure of the Valencian Community (PATIVEL), seeks to protect the green infrastructure of the Coast, thus avoiding and correcting municipal planning dysfunctions. Law 5/2014 on spatial planning, urbanism and landscape of the Valencia Region incorporates landscape conservation policies, using three specific tools: landscape research, integration and planning management. Policies related to nature reserves have played a fundamental role in the development of sustainability, because it affects 39.25% of the soil of the Valencia Region. Other policies also have a significant impact on tourism activities, such as infrastructure and water management [27].

The White Paper on Tourism highlights interinstitutional collaboration as the main factor for the development of actions that can be implemented in the territory, to provide the tourism model with sustainable and competitive conditions through four objectives: updating and diversification of mature coastal areas, integration of the tourist function in cities and metropolitan areas, nature reserve tourism, internal structure approved through tourist centers and geographic complementarity promotion as differential value in travel offers. The management of the tourist area is completed with initiatives for prevention and adaptation to climate change, incorporation into the Code of Ethics of Tourism of the Valencia Region, raising awareness of demand and creating products that adapt to the concept of sustainability [28].

Accessibility dimension
The Valencian Community, has promoted the Strategic Plan of Accessible Tourism. This document serves to promote accessible tourism and to perform a strategy of dissemination of accessible tourism in Valencia destinations. In recent years the region has drawn up proposals to promote the improvement of the accessibility of the destination, such as the introduction of magnetic loops in the Tourist Info Network, the Qualitur certificate that sets standards of accessibility and the modification of bathing places. The Good Practices Guide for tourist establishments in the Valencia Region includes accessibility criteria for places and resources [29] [30]. The White Paper on Tourism of the Valencian Community includes also some aspects related to accessible tourism. The Law 15/2018, of 7 June, leisure and hospitality in Valencia region refers to accessibility too.

Innovation dimension
The Valencian Tourism Agency has performed interesting initiatives regarding innovation in the

Region. First, the creation of the Valencian Institute of Tourism Technologies (Invattur.es), which has been promoter for innovation. Amongst main initiativess done so far, we find the application of business intelligence methods to support tourist info, big data projects, booking monitor tools, social networking barometers and the involvement in ITDs. In addition, the network of CdT centres (Centres de Turisme) (https://cdt.gva.es/red-de-centros), carries out a great job of training quality and differentiated human resources, which invests in the professionalization of the sector. Along with this initiative, in the last two years the Accetur program is also gaining strength to support projects of entrepreneurs in tourism.

Technology dimension

The tourist intelligence for a ITD consists in choosing the most important data for the local managers and businesses. Its analysis and integrated management system based on key indicators provides competitive advantages to support the smart actions carried out. This intelligence is a key factor of the

ITDs, as reflected in the Operational Manual for the configuration of ITDs [31]. Two advanced practices concerning technology have been developed in the region: Benidorm and Big Data, is one of the most interesting tourism intelligence projects of the region, which has initiated Big Data techniques to better know customers, with the aim of improving the tourist experience and their online marketing processes. [32]. Through the analysis of the data collected on social networks, Benidorm aims to know the needs of the tourist to improve their experience and focus on promotion and sales campaigns. The other practice is the Open Data Strategy in the Tourist Info Network, oriented to make easier the information managed by the public administration. Any person or company can examine, reuse and redistribute data, producing new services and improving transparency (open government) and to increase wealth generation through the intelligent organisation of resources (smart governance). The Valencian Tourism Agency, in collaboration with the Intelligent Data Analysis Laboratory of the University of Valencia, developed the tool Open Data Tourist Info. Citizens and businesses can reuse this data to produce economic value [33].

Conclusions

Governments have invested in recent years to create models of sustainable, technological and efficient tourist cities. In this scenario, the ITDs emerge, that is, innovative territories, reaffirmed on an advanced technological structure, which take advantage of the growth of ICTs to offer efficient services. Its purpose is to ensure the sustainable development of the territory, accessible to all and contribute to the relationship and integration of the visitor with the environment.

Spain has created different mechanisms to tranform tourist destinations into ITD. Some key regulation mechanisms around the Standard UNE 178501 Intelligent Tourist Destination Management System have also been built, aimed to regulate and establish a unique framework for destinations to be considered "smart".

Bearing in mind that this form of management calls for an open information and communication system and collaboration between actors, smart destination networks have also been developed, to bring together destinations to help them transform, allowing an exchange of information and experiences, developing joint projects and creating instruments or tools that facilitate the evaluation and detection of opportunities for improvement.

The Valencia Region has taken very big steps to become the territory that it is today, creating its own model based on the dimensions of the Spanish Smart Tourism Destination Program (STDP): governance, sustainability, accessibility, innovation and technology. It can become an inspiration

so that other regions can find a right track to become an intelligent territory.

This paper just shows the application of the STDP to a region, recognized as succesful. Future analysis should show some other initiatives. Best practices can be of help for the development of Smart Tourist Destinations anywhere.

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