Editorial: 80 Years of Tourism Review- Transformative and Regenerative Power of Smart Tourism",

80 years ago, two visionary scholars, Walter Hunziker and Kurt Krapf, from the Swiss Universities of St. Gallen and Bern respectively, realised the transformative and regenerative nature of tourism; particularly in the aftermath of the catastrophic period of the Second World War. With remarkable foresight, they published the inaugural issue of the Revue de Tourisme / The Tourist's Review / Zeitschrift für Fremdenverkehr on January 1, 1946, in English, French, and German. They proposed that tourism could serve as a powerful catalyst for transformative and regenerative development, fostering peace by rebuilding a war-torn and deeply divided Europe. Both founders regarded tourism as a tool for economic recovery, peace, and global understanding in the post-war era. They designed Tourism Review as a platform for public debate, bridging policymakers and scientific discovery, while addressing practical and technical tourism issues. Published frequently, Tourism Review aimed to create dialogue, foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among researchers, educators, and professionals in a multilingual and universal context. This initiative led to the establishment of the Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme (AIEST) in 1950, which evolved into a global network of tourism experts. In 2008 (Volume 63), AIEST sold Tourism Review to Emerald to professionalise the journal, develop its distribution and improve visibility and readership. The journal evolved as part of AIEST until 2016, guided by the leadership of distinguished editors Walter Hunziker, Kurt Krapf, Claude Kaspar, Hanspeter Schmidhauser, Peter Keller, Thomas Bieger, Christian Laesser, and Harald Pechlaner (Laesser, Bieger, Pechlaner, Keller, and Buhalis, 2020). Since 2017, Editor Dimitrios Buhalis has led Tourism Review through a significant transformation to enhance its global impact and academic standing by prioritising high-quality and impact research. This focus has led to strengthening its position as a leading tourism academic publication resulting in a significant increase in its citation metrics and academic influence, further establishing its prominence in tourism research, policy and thought leadership (Buhalis, 2020a).

Over the past 80 years, Tourism Review as the longest-established journal in the field, has evolved into a premier platform for multidisciplinary research, best practices, and the exchange of diverse ideas. Tourism Review has faithfully honoured the foresight, vision, and commitment of its founders; remaining true to their mission of exploring tourism as a powerful catalyst for societal progress. What is particularly remarkable is that, despite the dynamic changes in the tourism landscape, the journal's core vision has remained largely unchanged. It continues to address a broad range of tourism issues while fostering innovation, research excellence and thought leadership. It largely publishes research that not only advances academic debate and theory but also makes a significant contribution to professional practice. With a strong global perspective, the journal actively encourages contributions from all regions and disciplines, promoting the exchange of knowledge and perspectives across cultures

and geographies. This inclusive approach ensures that Tourism Review remains a pertinent and influential force in tourism research. Stronger than ever, it remains committed to advancing the impact and relevance of tourism research. With a clear focus on fostering regenerative development within the tourism industry, it strives to address pressing global challenges while delivering transformative benefits to society worldwide.

To celebrate the Tourism Review's 80th anniversary, this special issue features 30 expert articles offering unique insights into the future of tourism. The issue covers critical research areas including: ethics, mental health, diversity, consumer behaviour, destination management, climate change, sustainability, strategy, and technology. These visionary contributions underscore Tourism Review's holistic approach to understanding tourism as an interconnected ecosystem, which encompasses local residents, consumers, the tourism industry, policy development, and destination management. By integrating these diverse perspectives, the journal continues to shape the future of tourism research and practice in ways that reflect the evolving needs and challenges of a globalised world.

80 years since the Journal's inaugural issue the world is still facing evolving challenges that profoundly impact global development and inevitably the tourism industry (Butler, 2025). Issues such as climate change, wars and geopolitical conflicts, economic inequality, uneven distribution of wealth, economic and public health crises, and the rapid pace of technological advancements constitute a dynamic, ever-evolving, and complex landscape for tourism development and management. These challenges not only disrupt traditional tourism operations but also constantly reshape traveller behaviour, destination management strategies, and industry priorities. The growing urgency of climate change, marked by phenomena such as rising global temperatures, more frequent and severe weather events, bushfires, melting polar ice caps, and rising sea levels threatens biodiversity, natural and cultural heritage sites, as well as disrupts the tourism infrastructure (Gössling and Scott, 2025). Coastal and island destinations, in particular, face heightened risks of flooding and erosion, while ski resorts grapple with shorter seasons and unreliable snowfall. This has placed immense pressure on the industry to adopt sustainable and regenerative practices (Husamoglu, et al, 2025; Mihalic, 2025; Schmidt Rojas et al, 2025). At the same time, technological advancements and digital transformation are revolutionizing how tourism is marketed, experienced, and managed, demanding new skills and innovative solutions (Buhalis et al 2029; Law and Chen, 2025; Chon and Hao, 2025). Smart tourism and hospitality, Artificial Intelligence, robots and metaverse are some of the leading innovations that reshape the future of tourism (Buhalis et al, 2023; Bethune et al, 2022; Tuo, et al 2025; Bulchand-Gidumal, et al, 2024; Tran, 2025, Pizam et al, 2022; Ivanov et al, 2025), Despite these challenges, tourism remains a vital driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and social development, particularly for insular and peripheral regions that often have few alternative economic activities that can develop.

By addressing these pressing issues with resilience and adaptability, the tourism industry has the potential to emerge as a transformative force for positive change in a rapidly changing world. The COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns and travel restrictions effectively halted international leisure travel, deferring demand and

precipitating a severe decline in global travel activities. When tourism was paused, governments and regional authorities acknowledged the indispensable role of tourism and travel in sustaining communities and supporting societal livelihoods globally. The multifaceted significance of travel and tourism extends beyond its traditional economic contributions to encompass its vital role in mental well-being, fostering social connections, and promoting human interaction. Petrick and Wang (2025) explain that once COVID-19 vaccines were found to be effective and travel bans were lifted, much of the world saw "revenge travel" and vast increases in the number of travellers. This surge in travel demand led to overcrowding in numerous popular destinations, resulting in a variety of environmental and socioeconomic challenges. Inadequately planned destinations and unmanaged tourism growth have inevitably led to conflicts and undermined the competitiveness of many destinations; a phenomenon commonly referred to as "overtourism." (Milano, Novelli, Cheer, 2019; Milano, Cheer, and Novelli, 2019). Many iconic tourist honeypots experienced conflicts of interest between local residents and visitors, inflation in real estate and consumer prices, habitat destruction, and strain on water and energy resources (Mihalic and Kuščer, 2022). From a socioeconomic perspective, the sudden influx of travellers and exceeding carrying capacity often exacerbate inequalities, displace local communities, and increase the cost of living in tourist hotspots (Butler, 2020; Wall, 2020). Small businesses and local residents in these areas sometimes face challenges such as rising rents, over-commercialization, and loss of cultural authenticity. The seasonal nature of tourism left some destinations overly dependent on tourism revenues, exposing them to economic vulnerabilities. Pressure on local infrastructure, increased pollution, and degradation of natural and cultural heritage sites disrupted ecosystems, leading to protests against tourism in some destinations. Milano, Novelli, and Russo (2024) explain how mass tourism, touristification and overtourism in some cases have led to conflicts and anti-tourism activism.

Concerns about these tourism challenges and negative impacts are not new. As early as 1973, Sir George Young (1973) emphasized that tourism cannot be planned in isolation from broader economic and social systems. The term "overtourism" became popular as a simplistic way to describe the perceived negative impacts of excessive tourism on destinations, communities, and environments (O'Regan et al, 2022; Mihalic and Kuščer, 2022). People and media often use this term to express frustration, often without fully appreciating the complexity of the issue. They overlook the spatial and temporal dimensions, failing to recognize how the problem varies across different localities and timeframes hindering constructive dialogue and problem-solving (Wall, 2020; Butler, 2020 and 2025). Few realistic and pragmatic solutions are offered beyond the often-discussed concept of degrowth, which focuses on reducing the scale of economic activity to address environmental and social challenges (Higgins-Desbiolles, et al, 2019; Dwyer, 2023). While degrowth proposes reducing consumption and focusing on sustainability, it remains an idealistic framework that lacks concrete, implementable solutions in many sectors, including tourism. The idea of degrowth tourism often faces opposition from local stakeholders who rely on tourism for their livelihoods, as well as from government entities focused on economic growth. Although there are examples of destinations seeking to manage or limit tourism growth through regulations or policies—such as limiting visitor numbers, promoting sustainable practices, or encouraging off-season travel—these measures often stop

short of a full degrowth strategy and they are rarely implemented. Hitherto, there is no concrete example of a fully planned and executed degrowth tourism strategy anywhere in the world. No destination has yet fully implemented a structured, comprehensive approach to systematically reduce tourism activity. This is largely due to tourism's deep integration into local economies and cultures, where it serves as a major driver of employment, GDP, and infrastructure development. Proposing and enforcing measures that intentionally limit tourism growth presents significant challenges, as it risks causing substantial economic and social repercussions. The gap between the theoretical framework of degrowth and the practical realities of tourism development presents a significant challenge for policymakers, requiring careful balancing of environmental concerns, economic realities, and social equity.

This means that tourism destinations must be managed better to support their communities. In consultation with all relevant stakeholders, they should implement thoughtful planning, development, and strategic management that recognise their limits of tourism development and carrying capacity to ensure longer-term prosperity (Buhalis, 1999, Wall, 2020). Effective tourism planning requires a comprehensive approach, taking into account national, regional, and local dimensions, as well as the wide array of contexts and stakeholders involved in the activity. The complexity of tourism as an interconnected system requires strategic coordination of all stakeholders to achieve sustainable and inclusive outcomes. Equally, communities must carefully evaluate the opportunity costs associated with alternative economic activities to determine the most effective ways to generate resources and sustain their standard of living. This involves assessing not only the potential economic benefits of alternative industries, but also the social, cultural, and environmental impacts of these activities, as they may require greater investment, human capital, market access, technology, environmental resources, extensive supply chains and transportation, training and capacity building or policy support to be viable and competitive.

Communities must also consider long-term implications, such as how chosen economic activities align with their cultural identity, environmental preservation, and future resilience against global challenges like climate change or economic shocks. By weighing these factors holistically, communities can make pragmatic and informed decisions to ensure a sustainable quality of life for current and future generations. Participatory planning, evidence-based decision-making, inclusive stakeholder engagement, leadership and strong governance are required to navigate the trade-offs effectively and develop competitive, inclusive and sustainable places that cocreate value for both residents and visitors. A range of management indicators together with strategic directions need to ensure balanced development forcing tourist authorities to act within the context of a national plan which identifies the role of tourism and the key requirements (Wall, 2020; Butler, 2020). The role of regulation and rational government intervention is essential in the planning and development phases of tourism (Jenkins, 2020; Butler, 2025). They should aim to develop tourism in a way that prioritizes the long-term sustainability of local communities and ecosystems, ensuring that growth is balanced with environmental and social well-being towards regenerative and transformative tourism (Sheldon, 2022). Bellato, et al, (2022) explain that "regenerative tourism is a transformational approach that aims to fulfil the

potential of tourism places to flourish and create net positive effects through increasing the regenerative capacity of human societies and ecosystems."

As we are looking towards the next 80 years of tourism development it becomes apparent that tourism needs to go through a profound transformation to re-emerge as a critical catalyst for regenerative and transformative development within destinations (Sheldon, 2022). The key themes that emerge from the 30 "Horizon 2050" papers address a range of challenges including: Tourism Demand and Market Dynamics: Regenerative and sustainable tourism; digital transformation and technological evolutions, Mental health and well-being for human transformation; and co-creation and consumer experiences. These themes reflect the wide-ranging nature of tourism, and its intersection with technology, sustainability, mental health, and societal development. Addressing these issues requires a strategic rethinking of tourism practices to balance visitor satisfaction with the sustainable management of destinations. Strategies such as responsible tourism policies, visitor caps, community involvement, and investments in sustainable infrastructure can help mitigate these challenges and ensure long-term benefits for both destinations and their residents. Bellato, et al, (2022) suggest that regenerative tourism should create positive, long-term impacts on ecosystems through restoring and supporting self-sustaining systems. By involving collective efforts of people, governments, and businesses working together destinations can enhance the broader systems that tourism influences and depends on. Regenerative tourism approaches can stimulate net-positive outcomes to strengthen the ability of destinations and communities to thrive sustainably, improve both the environment and local well-being as well as foster long-term resilience for both people and places.

Smart tourism strategies are essential for the effective management of regenerative tourism, as they rely on evidence-based approaches that integrate tourism management and marketing knowledge (Buhalis, 2020b). These strategies use smartness by leveraging data, technologies and research, to capitalise on technological developments, and network all stakeholders (Buhalis et al 2023). Such strategies use systems thinking to allow for more informed decision-making, ensuring that tourism development and management cocreates value for all. They are designed to facilitate the adoption of best practices in tourism planning, development, and marketing, ensuring that the industry progresses in a responsible and impactful way. They also engage all stakeholders dynamically to develop a neural network that can address real-time challenges towards supporting crisis response and destination resilience (Bethune et al, 2022).

Innovative and forward-thinking interventions are crucial to ensure that tourism remains regenerative and transformative to align with both environmental sustainability and local community well-being. These strategies should not only embrace innovation but also be grounded in pragmatism and practicality, addressing the unique challenges that each destination faces at a granular level. The implementation of smart tourism practices should actively facilitate the cocreation of value among various stakeholders at a granular level. Smart technology and big data allow the dynamic collection of spatial and temporal longitudinal data for each

destination locality. Ethical principles must guide every decision, ensuring the welfare of all parties—from academic researchers and industry players to local residents and tourists (Tolkach, 2025). Ultimately, smart tourism strategies should drive transformation within the sector, contributing to the broader goals of regenerative development and promoting inclusive societies where tourism serves as a force for positive change and benefits are shared equitably. This approach encourages the adoption of practices that restore and enhance local environments, cultures, and economies while fostering long-term benefits for all stakeholders and living organisms involved (Bellato et al, 2022).

Governance at the local, regional and national levels needs to play a vital role in guiding tourism development towards smart, sustainable societies that use tourism regeneratively. However, many governments either choose not to engage with tourism experts or/and lack the resources needed for professional tourism planning, development, management and marketing; often allowing market forces to dictate its pace and direction. This often results in irrational political decisions, driven by incompetence, nepotism, personal agendas or corruption, often leading to dependency on multinational corporations, creating neo-colonial conditions, and fostering unsustainable practices that harm communities. Traditional marketing focuses on increasing visitation without considering the unique characteristics and limitations of each destination, while planning often focuses on limiting tourism without addressing the needs of the market and entrepreneurs. A balanced approach that fosters value co-creation for all stakeholders is essential for regenerative tourism development. To ensure regenerative and transformative development, governments must leverage smart infrastructures—advanced technological systems, data analytics, and digital tools—to create robust frameworks for tourism development. These infostructures can help to streamline planning processes, enhance participatory and inclusive decision-making, as well as ensure that resources are used efficiently and sustainably. Smart infostructure can also enable better coordination among various stakeholders, facilitating a more integrated and balanced approach to tourism development. Strong leadership is essential to guide this process, by developing the vision and knowledge to anticipate future trends. Political will is essential to implement effective policies and regulations that prioritize long-term sustainability over short-term gains. Policy and decision-makers from both the public sector and enterprises must be able to navigate complex challenges, such as balancing economic growth with environmental preservation and social well-being. Robust planning and regulation are key components to foster regenerative practices enabling the restoration and enhancement of natural and cultural resources while promoting inclusive economic opportunities. Through careful integration of technology, data, and leadership, governments can create a resilient tourism industry that supports regenerative and transformative development, benefiting both local communities and global society in the long run.

Tourism Review fully recognises the responsibility of academic research towards these developments and addresses cutting-edge topics that advance the theoretical and practical understanding of the tourism industry. The journal welcomes academic articles that explore smart tourism, destination development, participatory decision-making, regenerative planning and innovative management. Innovative,

interdisciplinary research that examines emerging trends, technologies, and challenges shaping the future of tourism, while providing insights to guide governance in building a resilient tourism industry, is particularly encouraged. Such research should emphasize long-term, regenerative, and transformative development to ensure the sustainable evolution of the sector. We encourage submissions that examine how robust policies and regulations can promote regenerative practices, restore natural and cultural resources, and create inclusive economic opportunities. Articles should address the importance of strong leadership and political will in guiding tourism development, particularly in balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and social well-being.

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