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**Quality of Life:  
Health, Tourism and Climate**

**ATLAS Reflections 2023**

# **Quality of Life: Health, Tourism and Climate**

## **ATLAS Reflections 2023**

**October 2023**

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## Introduction

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Dear ATLAS members,

Thanks for taking the time to read through the ATLAS Reflections 2023. This year we asked the conference organisers and others engaged in ATLAS to write short articles on the conference theme. This has resulted in a good number of contributions in this Reflections from SIG Coordinators, workshop organisers and others for you to read through.

As always, we here at ATLAS have remained busy over the last year with a hectic schedule of events and a number of initiatives that have seen significant moves forward. Below, I outline more details about what we have been doing since late 2022.

Last September saw our first in-person conference since 2019. Hosted by Angela Wright and her wonderful colleagues at Munster Technological University, the conference attracted 162 delegates from 23 countries. The conference illustrates why ATLAS events remain enduringly popular. The collegial and welcoming atmosphere invited old friends to reconnect and allowed the many new faces at the conference to really see why ATLAS exists. The networks, connections and friendships that the conference helps to build, alongside the exchange of knowledge and ideas, are fantastic to see. At the same time, we remain very aware that the future of such events needs careful consideration.

November kick-started the next round of events starting with the now annual ATLAS Africa webinar in early November. This was an opportunity for postgraduate students from the University of Pretoria to report and reflect on internship experiences within a work-integrated learning framework. Later in November saw the ATLAS Latin America Conference. With a topic of 'New challenges for tourism in Latin America', this hybrid conference was hosted by Universidad Externado de Colombia and welcomed 59 delegates from 15 countries over two days. The success of this event illustrates that our Latin America chapter continues to go from strength to strength.

Late November 2022 saw our Annual Members Meeting being held on-line. This event is normally held at the Annual conference, however, we had decided to hold it a later date and include a 'coffee break' theme to allow a more inclusive meeting. Thanks to all of those who took the time to attend and hear about coffee cultures in Spain and Sweden.

Early January saw Leontine, Jantien and myself head off to Bad Gleichenberg for a pre-conference meeting with Daniel Binder and Harald Friedl, the conference organisers. It was exciting to get a preview of the venues and see the conference coming together. February saw us in a new capacity as we were able to assist the Critical Tourism Studies Asia Pacific (CTS AP) Conference with administrative processes and registration of their 3rd conference. With a theme of 'Tourism Metamorphosis: Creative Destruction and the Remaking of Tourism Geographies', CTS AP3 was a huge success and we were very pleased to be able to play a small role in that success. More on the future of CTS AP and ATLAS a bit later.

At the end of March, the new ATLAS Special Interest Group on the Circular Economy and Circularity in the Space of Tourism and Hospitality held their first webinar. The webinar was

very well attended and the group also have a special track at this year's Annual Conference. We are very excited to see such relevant and innovative groups flourishing as part of the ATLAS SIG community.

Late May saw the ATLAS SIG in Gastronomy Tourism hold a 4-day event in Sibiu, Romania. With a focus on 'Tradition and innovation in gastronomy', the event combined in-depth discussions with fieldtrips to experience the gastronomy of the region. These almost annual events always attract a wonderful range of attendees who are interested in many different aspects of gastronomic tourism.

Two more events filled up the latter part of the year. In mid-June the ATLAS Cultural Tourism SIG co-hosted a conference with CultSense which looked at 'Bridging Culture through Travel'. Another great success, this event welcomed 92 participants from 15 countries and was an example of how theory and practice can come together to provide room for discussion and positive future collaborations and outputs. It was also an example of how ATLAS has a continuing role to play in a wide range of European projects. July saw the ATLAS Education SIG host a webinar on 'Inspiring and Engaging Tourism Students post Covid'. This webinar really highlighted the ways in which teaching has evolved and changed over the last few years and the examples provided by various institutions could help us all think of ways to re-imagine our teaching pedagogies. We also welcome two new SIGs this year. The Artificial Intelligence and Tourism Special Interest Group and Animals in Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Special Interest Group are both being launched at the Annual Conference and we are excited to see these groups develop over the coming years.

Alongside our events, ATLAS continues to work on new initiatives to engage our members and keep ATLAS a viable, relevant organisation to the tourism community. One of the most positive things to come out of the 2022 Annual Conference was the interest in being on the ATLAS Board and in late 2022 we welcomed several new members onto the Board. The vitality and energy of our new members has been fantastic and, along with the solid presence of our existing Board members, we are looking forward to a very vibrant ATLAS over the next few years.

Jane Turner from Leeds Beckett University has taken on the responsibility of looking after the SIG groups. Jane has been hugely proactive, and we have to say a huge thanks for taking on some of the tasks that had fallen to Leontine and Jantien over the last few years. We have already seen SIG activities increasing due to Jane's engagement and we are looking forward to seeing a wide range of SIG activities over the next year.

Ziene Mottiar from TU Dublin has joined Silvia Aulet Serrallonga as one of the Coordinators of the Student Chapter and she is also Coordinator of the Winter University – updates to come on this over the next few months. Ziene has led the development of a podcast series aimed at undergraduate students and thesis writing (which will be launched at the 2023 Conference) and has been a real inspiration in bringing ATLAS into the podcast arena. With her help, we now have a template for future ATLAS podcast series and are looking forward to developing podcasts for our members and wider audiences.

Lenia Marques has taken over as Coordinator of Publications and work has started on trying to take the ATLAS Review series to the next level. Sheena Carlisle, now at Cardiff University, joins the Board as Coordinator of the AQUALT Accreditation System. This initiative came from the ATLAS Advisory Board and Sheena has been instrumental in moving the well-developed proposal from the Advisory Board into something that is almost ready to be piloted. We see ATLAS being a positive accreditation avenue for institutions worldwide.

Angela Wright from Munster Technical University and Conny Mayer-Bonder from DHBW Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg have joined Alžbeta Kiralova from AMBIS University

in a newly created Connections team. Our goal with this group is to find more productive ways to integrate different external groups, including industry, NGOs etc., into the ATLAS community. Please keep your eyes and ears open for news about this group over the next little while.

A few more additions and changes to the Board include Sharif Shams Imon from Macao Institute for Tourism Studies joining Chin-Ee Ong as coordinator of ATLAS Asia. We welcome Miju Choi from Leeds Beckett University as Coordinator of the PhD Colloquium and she will be hosting the PhD Event on the Tuesday before the Annual conference. A new role of conference coordinator has been added to the Board and Daniel Binder from FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences has joined us this year. This role will change regularly to reflect the upcoming conference hosts. Finally, we welcome Corné Dijkmans from Breda University of Applied Sciences as Vice Chair of ATLAS. We are always keen to welcome new people onto the Board and if you are interested in taking a more active role in ATLAS, please contact Leontine, Jantien or myself to talk about opportunities and time commitments.

This year saw the third year of our ATLAS thesis prizes. Our congratulations go to: Aaron Godfrey for Best Bachelor's thesis; Eva Joyce for Best Master's thesis; Radina Shikova for Highly Commended Bachelors thesis; and Angela Dimitrova for Highly Commended Master's thesis. We have been fortunate to receive a number of good quality entries for our prize categories with 4 Bachelor theses received and 9 Master's theses received and encourage all members to submit student's work for the ATLAS thesis prizes. Thanks go to the Advisory Board who review the thesis and nominate the award winners. We will host a webinar later in the year for the Award recipients where they can present their research to the ATLAS community.

The Advisory Board remains active and is meeting on a regular base via ZOOM. They continue to support the Thesis Prizes and advising on the AQUALT initiative. They have also been instrumental in finding a new academic "home" for ATLAS. The Advisory Board has been working with Breda University of Applied Science (BUAS) to create a partnership which has resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding between ATLAS and BUAS.

We are already seeing the benefits of the new 'home' of ATLAS at BUAS. The cooperation has resulted in involving students of BUAS in the 2024 conference organizing process and it is my pleasure to announce that Corné Dijkmans will take over as the new Chair of ATLAS at the Annual Confernece in June 2024.

ATLAS is also involved in a new project about 'Cross-border cultural & creative tourism in rural & remote areas' (CROCUS) for the coming 3 years (2024-2026). More info about this project will follow in 2024.

We have been working hard on the new website and it will be launched during the ATLAS Annual Conference in Bad Gleichenberg in Austria in October 2023. We realize that not all pages currently have content and we are sure there will be some imperfections and hiccups here and there. We appreciate your patience and we are doing our best to get everything ready as soon as possible. We hope you will enjoy it!

On to some more very exciting news for ATLAS. Over the course of 2023 we have been working closely with Critical Tourism Studies Asia Pacific and are very pleased that this has led to a more formal connection between CTS AP and ATLAS. As many of you many have seen on various social media channels, the new collaboration of ATLAS Critical Tourism Studies – Asia Pacific is officially up and running and we are very much looking forward to working with everyone involved to begin to organise the 2025 ATLAS CTS-AP conference. From a personal perspective, I am so pleased to have been a small part of making this happen. I think both organisations can only benefit from closer connections and I am very excited by

the opportunities this collaboration will bring. Thanks to Joseph Cheer, Chin-Ee Ong, Jamie Gillen, Yana Wengel, Mary Mostafanezhad, Claudia Dolezal, and everyone involved with CTS-AP.

Finally, we have some upcoming events that are worth noting. In November (15th to 17th) the ATLAS Business SIG will host a conference in Amsterdam on the theme 'Business Tourism and The New Normal'. Whilst the abstract deadline has passed, registration is still open and if you are keen to take part, please contact Leontine or Jantien for further details. We are in a wonderful position to be able to announce our next four Annual Conference hosts. Firstly, our Annual Conference for 2024 will be hosted by Breda University of Applied Science in The Netherlands. Please note that the conference will be held in June 2024 (rather than our normal September/October), so expect to see a call for sessions and papers shortly. The Rovira i Virgili University in Tarragona (Spain) will host the 2025 conference. Again, we expect this event to be held before the summer (late May/June 2025). Thirdly, Leeds Beckett University in the UK will host the 2026 conference. Finally, in 2027, the conference will be hosted by xxx in Viana do Castelo in Portugal. We are excited to be able to head back to Portugal for the fourth time in 30 year (1997, 2007, 2017 and 2027). More details on all of our conferences and events are available on our website.

As always, I want to personally thank Leontine Onderwater and Jantien Veldman. ATLAS would not exist without their hard work and dedication. Their knowledge of all things ATLAS and their flexibility in their roles remains invaluable. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

We would also like to say a huge thanks to the Board Members who have stepped down or will step down shortly from their roles in the ATLAS Board. Siliva Aulet Serrallonga has stepped down from the role of Student Coordinator and Lenia Marques has stepped down from the Publications role. Thanks also to everyone involved in ATLAS; the Board, Advisory Board and all University and student members. Please keep up to date with our activities through our website, Facebook page, You Tube channel and X/Twitter.

To conclude, thanks to all our members for their continued support of ATLAS. We appreciate every interaction and I hope we continue to have opportunities to meet in person. Even as we recognise the necessity of changing how we, as scholars, students and industry do 'business', we believe ATLAS is a key organisation in ensuring sustainable and positive collaboration and networking opportunities. Our goal remains to provide events, publications, collaboration and networking opportunities for our members, and we think we continue to be successful in our endeavours.

Take care, and see you soon!  
Tara Duncan  
October 2023

## **Quality of life: health, tourism, and climate. What we expect from the ATLAS Annual Conference in Austria's most beautiful region of spas and volcanos.**

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Tourism has had to endure an extremely dynamic development of its framework conditions in the last four years. While many cities and regions were still plagued by over-tourism until February 2020, this situation tipped into the opposite with the outbreak of Covid. Closed borders and lockdowns made it possible for a few weeks to experience a world that had long since become foreign to us without any tourism. Soon, however, tourism regained its dynamism, albeit within national borders. In Austria, for example, the phenomenon of over-tourism could now be observed in completely new places close to nature. It seems that the culture of tourist travel, in the sense of consuming stimulating landscapes and emotional experiences, has become so deeply ingrained in our modern lifestyle that the desire of travelling outweighs the fear of epidemics or personal contagion. When the borders finally fell again, global tourism rose from its rigor mortis as if nothing had happened. However, this almost seamless following of the development up to the outbreak of Covid also means back to over-tourism, to increasing emissions that are harmful to the climate, to traffic jams on motorways and at airports...

In the 1990s, a satirical film series called "Die Piefke-Saga" was shown on Austrian television. "Piefke" was a pejorative Austrian term originating from the 19th century for German citizens who were perceived as overpowering and arrogant. The film series portrayed the situation of tourism in Tyrol, dominated by German guests. It was characterized by massive economic dependence on an all-powerful guest, for whose satisfaction everything is sacrificed, ultimately also one's own quality of life, whatever is to be understood by that. Interestingly, even later broadcasts of this film series repeatedly met with fierce criticism among Tyrolean tourists. This is not surprising, because Tyrol is the most developed tourism area in Austria, and German guests still dominate. And it is highly likely that many of the current Alpine tourism hotspots would have tremendously suffered from emigration without tourism.

Since then, tourism has not only become one of the most important drivers of economic growth. This growth is unabated. Looking at different forecasts for the development of the international airline industry, annual growth of 2.9% to 4.2% is expected until 2050 (Craver, 2022). In view of the experience of the immediate kick-start of the tourism engine after Covid, higher growth figures are probably more likely. But what does this mean in concrete terms? That the entire globe will gradually become a thoroughly economized satellite village of Dubai, in which the perfect satisfaction of every consumer desire will become the expression of the highest tourist artistry? In which all tourist activities take place in permanently air-conditioned luxurious vehicles or rooms to avoid contact with heat and working personnel? How topical is the "Piefke saga"...

Harald stopped in Dubai for a long stopover on his way back from a project meeting in Vietnam a few months ago. He wanted to experience this new "Mecca" of postmodern tourism with his own eyes: that pilgrimage site of unlimited possibilities of tourist spectacles, the place with the most superlatives - with the tallest tower in the world, with the biggest airport in the world, with the biggest mall in the world, the hottest ski resort in the world... He experienced the new railway line from the flight terminal to the Dubai Mall with its kilometer-long air-conditioned

gangway, he experienced the infinitely large collection of luxury shops. And he experienced the great throng of people from Uganda, Pakistan, the Philippines, and India who drove from their work to their accommodation after one o'clock in the morning, when the Dubai Mall finally closed. They, the nameless army of cheap labor, had to travel by taxis, because the railway line is only there for the paying guests! "Piefke saga" in Arabic...

Bad Gleichenberg, the venue of the ATLAS Annual Conference 2023, is a traditional spa town in the heart of south-eastern Styria. In the 19th century, the nobility of the old Danube Monarchy stayed here for a cure and spread imperial flair. And even after the fall of the Danube Monarchy, the town was able to live quite well from the spa guests - in contrast to the region of south-eastern Styria. This region lies in the extreme south-east of Austria. After the Second World War, this world bordered directly on the "Iron Curtain" and was thus, as it were, a dead end. The people here, mainly employed in agriculture, only saw a future in emigration. This changed fundamentally 25 years ago.

On the one hand, valuable thermal springs were discovered in the region and developed into a network of wellness resorts that became a magnet for wellness tourists. But much more interesting was what happened to the rest of the region. Visionary politicians invested European funding in building a new, self-confident identity. Through numerous trainings, workshops, innovation funding and much more, the self-image of the people in the region slowly changed from "worthless starving poor on the end of the world" to a self-confident, future-oriented, and innovative citizen. The people learned to value their resources and to use them prudently. The focus was on the development of the region, the qualification of the people and the promotion of the quality of life. Only about twenty years later did a process of conscious orientation towards tourism begin, building synergies between the network of thermal spas and the well-developed surrounding region. The focus here is on health-promoting, climate-friendly offers such as bicycle or culinary tourism, for example along the newly developed "Route 66", which also leads through Bad Gleichenberg. What is most interesting about the example of Southeast Styria, which proudly calls itself "Steirisches Vulkanland", is the role of sustainability. This has been a central guiding value in regional development from the very beginning. In this area tourism learns sustainability from the region. Here, tourism asks what it can do for the region, not the other way around. All these efforts culminated in the establishment of a separate department for habitat management in the DMO "Thermen- & Vulkanland", which is concerned with the tourism marketing and development of the destination. Both the regional development organization and the destination management organization work together to develop tourism in a future oriented way to achieving a liveable area for citizens and guests.

"What can tourism do for the people of a region?" Hardly any other question sums up the core principle of sustainable tourism development so precisely. In a world where people are increasingly mobile and demand more and more tourism services, innovative solutions are needed to maximize the benefits of this growth for the "travelers". Good solutions are needed so that attractive destinations are not overrun and exploited like gold fields. And it needs solutions to the fact that these increasing numbers of tourists are producing more and more emissions, fueling the very problems that are driving them out of the hot cities and into the cooler regions of Europe.

There are many problems, many challenges, many threat scenarios, many associated conflicts. But instead of burying our heads in the sand in despair, we must face these challenges. We must do what we do best: search for helpful answers in an exploratory way. That is what the ATLAS Annual Conference here in Bad Gleichenberg is all about: learning together from each other, critically discussing findings and their transferability to other contexts, in order to make a small contribution to the sustainable design of tourism for a better quality of life - in a future worth living. We are looking forward to this.

Source:

Craver, B. (2022). Polishing my crystal Ball: Airline Traffic in 2050. The International Council on Clean Transportation, <https://theicct.org/global-aviation-airline-traffic-jan22/>

## Zero-emissions tourism in 2050, or how to save the Tourism World in four Tries. Background of the Simulation of a “Serious Game”

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Considering Climate Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 13, addressing climate change and its impacts, the travel and tourism industry performs poorly. However, **decarbonizing tourism is feasible**, as demonstrated by a scenario from Breda University of Applied Sciences and Stenden University, Leeuwarden, which was developed for the Travel Foundation. Immediate action is crucial. The good news is, there are three scenarios to choose from, but only one is a desirable one. One scenario is to simply ignore tourism's role in causing climate change and become a vector in already very visible disastrous impacts. Another scenario achieving zero emissions, is to completely abandon travel. But we can skip these two, and create a scenario that takes environmental boundaries seriously, but still achieves to keep the traveller going.

Still, the problem is severe. Though **tourism's carbon footprint varies between 5% and 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions** and its total contribution to total climate change is some 10-11%, the future problem is of another order. When tourism does not mitigate, it will on its own consume a quarter of the global carbon footprint remaining if humanity wants to keep the temperature below 2 °C. and even half of the budget if we want to stay safely under the 1.5 °C limit. The biggest challenge, but also the best opportunity is the fact that transportation accounts for about 75% of tourism emissions.

Despite claims that tourism growth has decoupled from emissions growth, emissions have continued to rise and are projected to increase further by 2050. To reduce emissions rapidly and achieve net-zero by 2050, we must focus on low-emission tourism sectors and electrify tourism using renewable energy. This transition faces challenges in aviation, the 'hard-to-abate' subsector of tourism causing most of tourism's emissions. Aviation accounted for 55% of tourism emissions in 2019, with long-haul flight emissions expected to quadruple by 2050. While hydrogen-powered aircraft are still decades away, sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) offer a more immediate option. However, their production must increase substantially. Moreover, not every type of SAF remove all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions - often 20-50% is not reduced - and some SAFs, particularly those that produced from energy-crops or from organic waste, cause serious problems with nature conservation, and agriculture. The problem is that plants are inefficient solar energy converters and thus require enormous stretches of land to grow in sufficient quantities.

Therefore, the **zero-emissions scenario, proposes synthetic "e-fuels" produced directly from CO<sub>2</sub>** captured from the atmosphere or oceans, and closing the atmospheric carbon cycle. But they will be 4-6 times more expensive than fossil fuels. To promote their use, we suggest a global target for blending sustainable aviation fuels, starting at 1% by 2025 and reaching 100% by 2050. The high cost is mainly caused by the large amounts of renewables needed for production. This amount of energy would grow to 25-50% of all renewables by about 2040

if aviation would continue to grow by 4% per year. Therefore, the growth of air travel should be limited to close to 2019 levels.

**Offsetting emissions is not recommended**, as it may distract from long-term reduction strategies. Instead, we propose mandatory e-fuel use in aviation, investments in electrification, renewable energy, technology, and normal and high-speed rail infrastructure, along with subsidies for sustainable transport and a global airport capacity cap. The high-speed rail helps to keep a large share of the medium long distances we are used to travel. Long-haul travel will reduce in frequency, but still be available in 2050.

In this decarbonization scenario, revenue, trips, and guest nights can continue to grow without significant environmental harm. Medium- and short-distance travel by electric car, train, road, bus, and ferry will replace air travel. Part of long-haul trips will move to the majority of trips at distances between 750 km and 2500 km. Companies embracing decarbonization will find new opportunities and partnerships. **Change is happening slowly, driven by policy and public opinion.** Some countries have implemented measures like banning short-haul flights and increasing e-fuel production. However, for substantial change, international aviation and shipping emissions must be included in national climate plans.

Two potential solutions are global airport slot caps and including international aviation emissions in national CO2 budgets. Emissions from travel must be fully accounted for in tourism plans and as a cost in product development and marketing. In summary, decarbonizing tourism is possible through electrification, sustainable fuels, and policy changes. Real change requires global accountability for travel emissions and a commitment to sustainability in the tourism industry. And the final good news is that halving emissions will still be reached in the 2030s.

**You are not convinced that this is the only solution?**

**In that case, please join the workshop** to creep under the skin of the usual suspects, like IATA, UNWTO, destinations, the railways, the accommodation and hospitality sector and NGO's. As part of one of the stakeholder groups, you will be able to propose policies out of 45 concrete ones, ranging from taxes and subsidies to offsetting and investing in high-speed rail. The first round is easy; just learn how to handle the policy model. In the second you try all the usual measures from your stakeholder group's perspective. Of course, believe us, none of these will deliver zero-emissions or even any reduction! Worse even, **you will learn how the effects of your well-intended environmental flagship measures will be destroyed by other stakeholder groups.** So in the third round you will have to go further. Still no reductions? Then in the fourth round, you may **negotiate with other stakeholder groups and try to unite on the zero-emission target.** In our experience only some groups succeed, many utterly fail. Your advantage is that you have read all the above and might have an idea where to go.

## Circular Economy and circular regenerative processes for a Healthy Life

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### ATLAS SIG Circular Economy

Circular Economy is a concept that dates to the early 1970s and urges an economy able to mimic biological regenerative cyclic processes. As such, the paradigm of the Circular Economy aims at moulding the notion of 'circularity' into an economy. In doing so it conveys two key understandings and imaginaries. On the one side, it conveys the ancient archetype of cyclic enduring processes that have been used to make sense of life on Earth, of biological processes, and of cyclic nature of material and spiritual life (e. g. carbon cycle, cycle of the seasons, cyclic religious rituals). On the other side, it carries the idea of an economic system that does not merely pursue linear growth and economic goals but embraces a holistic approach by envisioning the enduring regeneration of products and materials.

Our reflection on the Circular Economy chimes with the ancient Greek notion of *Oikonomia* which differs from contemporary economics in its stronger relationship to ethics and praiseworthy goals. Hence, it is a Circular *Oikonomia* that focuses on the stewardship of our 'household' - namely our planet and the creatures that inhabit it - and that goes beyond the idea of a circular design and the regeneration of materials and products. It means envisioning the Circular Economy as an *Oikonomia* ethically driven towards praiseworthy goals through circular regenerative processes of products, services, mobilities, and natural assets. This approach could help to critically enact sustainability and rethink tourism as an agent of positive change, regeneration, and a healthy life for both human and non-human animals and the planet.

Circular Economy is already at the centre of a renewed institutional and political interest. In 2015 the European Commission elaborated the first *Circular Economy Action Plan* that was aimed at stimulating Europe's transition towards a Circular Economy. In 2020 the European Commission launched the new *Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe*. As part of this action plan, the European Union legislative framework on waste entered into force in 2018, setting clear targets for the reduction of waste, waste management and recycling. The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) identified the *European Circular Economy Action Plan* as best practice for accelerating the achievement of the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) and the *2030 Agenda*. Nevertheless, despite this political and institutional attention, the industry and academic debate and interest in the potentialities and constraints of the Circular Economy in Tourism and Hospitality is still limited and scattered. Moreover, there is not yet a deeper critical reflection on the alternatives to the (neoliberal) growth-oriented economic paradigm within the tourism and hospitality industry. This means that - for the tourism and hospitality sector, the implications of the Circular Economy, understood - as stated above - as an *Oikonomia*, is still largely unexplored and under theorised.

Therefore, through our Special Interest Group we would like to reflect and envision a Circular Economy that - in the socio-relational space of tourism and hospitality - can activate deeper regenerative processes for places, natural assets, and living creatures. It can do this by

prompting a multiplicity of novel relations, connections, and networks among a plurality of stakeholders. In this way, a novel tourism space made of different stakeholders with different and multiple functions can emerge and pursue the wellbeing of both the local community and global 'household' we inhabit and belong to. For instance, in tourism destinations, a Circular *Oikonomia* can help regenerating monocultural farmlands via biodiversity enhancement and/or reintroduction; can rehabilitate the local heritage and the abandoned real estate for the benefit of dwellers and visitors; can transform hospitality facilities into hubs of social inclusiveness by involving local community members in projects of waste collection and upcycling, and can organize forms of green mobility to facilitate proximity tourism via the involvement of local stakeholders and actors.

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## Some Reflections on Wellness, Sustainability and Regenerative Travel

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Since COVID, the concern with health has increased significantly, often manifesting itself in the growth of wellness tourism. Oliver et al. (2018) suggest that quality of life represents the general wellbeing of both individuals and society, whereas wellness is the process of trying to improve those aspects of life that contribute to quality of life, wellbeing and especially health. This can mean making informed choices in both lifestyle and travel behaviour, including choosing destinations carefully, as well as adapting behaviour in the destination.

In challenging times, people need coping strategies, which can mean improving mental wellness or seeking spirituality. It was argued by some authors that wellness is not only attractive for tourists, it can also open the door to developing new products and activities in destinations, potentially solving issues relating to overtourism (Pocinho et al., 2022). During and after the pandemic, people started to re-assess their values in life, including simpler, more sustainable and slower experiences. As a result, there has been an increasing promotion of natural landscapes in preference to cities, especially as many cultural cities were crowded and suffering from overtourism in the pre-COVID period. Some studies of wellness tourism during and after COVID emphasise the importance of outdoor activities and connecting to nature for relaxation, escapism, rejuvenation and recovery (Kessler et al., 2020). In addition to (renewed) contact with nature, trends in sustainable living are also creating the desire for healthier, local and organic foods, outdoor fitness and nature-based therapies (e.g. forest therapy). As well as engaging in post-COVID self-care and boosting of immune systems, many people are keen to travel again and to make the most of their lives. This might mean wanting to be their 'best selves' and therefore looking for self-development and even transformation.

The Five Rs of Wellness Tourism model (Figure 1) shows how tourists are firstly seeking rest and relaxation. This is probably the main motivation for most forms of tourism, with the exception of some hedonistic activities which represent fun (e.g. party tourism). Rest is a desired outcome at a fundamental level, but for those people who are especially stressed out in life or approaching burnout, some wellness tourism facilities (e.g. spas and retreats) help them to recuperate and restore some of their lost energy and their enthusiasm for life. Crises usually engender some form of resilience, as people are forced to become stronger in both mind and body. They feel a sense of achievement for having 'got through' the hard times and are more prepared if they encounter such an experience again. If they also engage in some more transformational types of tourism where they learn how to improve their physical and mental health, their experiences may prove to be regenerative. The experience can also become regenerative for the destination if they choose a location which is managed sustainably and where economic and social benefits also reach local communities.

Figure 1: The Five 'R's of Wellness Tourism (Smith, 2022)



Recently, some work has been undertaken on the different experiencescapes in wellness tourism, including servicescapes, socialscapes, culturescapes and naturescapes (Dryglas and Smith, 2023). Naturescapes in a spa context have sometimes been neglected in favour of other scapes, especially interior design and customer service. Not wanting to deny the importance of these issues, we should also remember that spas were traditionally located in natural landscapes because these provided a healing environment for the patients. Even if guests came for medical treatments like balneology or physiotherapy, part of their recovery would be to spend time in the landscape and nature, even if it just meant a gentle stroll. We have perhaps lost sight of this aspect of spas and wellness, except in the very few remaining therapeutic destinations that continue to combine healing with nature-based recovery and cultural entertainment too. One of the challenges is that wellness tourists may be less focused on healing and more enthusiastic about beauty treatments or fun waters. Nevertheless, many spa designers are still creating indoor spaces that provide wonderful views of nature outside such as mountains, the sea or lakes. It may be important to encourage outdoor recreation too if optimum physical and mental benefits are to be gained by wellness tourists.

There has been much recent talk about regenerative tourism. At a very basic level, this means improving the destination through tourism. It has been argued by established scholars in tourism like Pauline Sheldon (2020) and Larry Dwyer (2020) that we need to re-think the way in which we measure the success of destinations. One such way is to focus on the wellbeing or quality of life of local residents and to centralize wellbeing in tourism policy and destination management. On the other hand, as stated earlier, wellness tourists are (firstly) looking for rest and relaxation and it is the duty of the destination developers and managers to provide for their needs too. But this does not need to be at the expense of the environment or residents. Filep et al.'s (2022) recent study reconceptualised and measured tourist wellbeing to include connections to natural environments. Regenerative tourism should foster caring, respectful relations between humans and nature (Dredge, 2022).

One of the other notions that has garnered considerable interest in recent years is the concept of 'transformational tourism'. The term is not new and was used more than a decade ago by Yvette Reisinger (2013), however, the term is now being connected to shifts in consciousness that not only improve the individual's wellbeing but also contribute to community and societal development (Sheldon, 2020). The concept has also been linked to nature-based tourism, because it encourages people to re-connect with the natural world within a 'living systems' framework (Bellato et al., 2022). Research has shown that the more people connect with nature, the more likely they are to value it and to become environmental stewards who exhibit more sustainable behaviour. Thus nature-based wellness experiences can help to create tourists who contribute to more regenerative approaches and environmental and societal wellbeing.

In summary, we can see that wellness tourism is a growing trend, but the nature of it is changing in accordance with new approaches to tourism development that embrace more regenerative and transformational types of activities. Ideally, we want to encourage tourists to follow pathways to wellness that improve their own lives in destinations that are sustainable

and bring maximum benefits to the local communities. Even though the full responsibility for regenerative tourism cannot lie with tourists who are primarily seeking rest, relaxation and health improvement, the very fact that they are re-connecting with nature, caring about communities and giving back to the destination in some way could enhance their happiness even further.

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## **Health, Heritage Tourism, and Climate: Beyond Quality of Life? Some Reflections from ATLAS SIG Heritage Tourism and Education**

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Here at Heritage Tourism and Education SIG, we find the conference theme intriguing. More importantly, it is one where much further academic and scientific inquiries could be made. As a SIG that examines the role of heritage tourism in all its cultural-natural forms, we are keen to build on this theme to explore and examine the ways in which heritage education and heritage tourism feature (or not) in the creation and maintenance of human and planetary health.

To do this, we, as a humanity, ought to consider not just human-centric concerns of 'quality of life' but to interrogate our broader responsibilities as a species on this planet. There are a few ways we can approach this. First, we consider how visitations and related protection of sites of cultural, natural or mixed significances add value to not just natural and cultural knowledge and tourism experiences but also to the betterment of human health and quality of life. Next, we look closely at how such human-centric concerns could also work towards mitigating the climate challenge and in improving biodiversity.

For instance, heritage education, conservation and climate change induced impact mitigation could be linked in a symbiotic relationship. In Singapore, mangrove advocacy group, Restore Ubin Mangroves (R.U.M.) have had great success combining these three interrelated work and processes. R.U.M is a community group that draws on people from all walks of life in its mangrove restoration, outreach and education work. Supported scientifically by mangrove scientist Professor Dan Friess and his Mangrove Lab, the group restored mangroves on Pulau Ubin, an island in Singapore and used that as a platform to lobby for state-support in mangrove and nature conservation and inspire the public. The actual result of having healthier mangroves in Ubin has, in turn, helped clean up waters in the narrow straits of Johore (enhancing health for people and planet) and help Pulau Ubin withstand stronger storm surges consequent of climate change.

On the cultural spectrum, indigenous, local and regional knowledge in cooling dwellings and habitats could have profound impacts on the reduction of air-conditioning required and the related energy and fossil fuel needs. From the wind towers and wind-catchers of the Middle East to the stilts elevating Southeast Asia houses from the heat and humidity of the tropical grounds, examples abound traditional designs and architectures which could aid in our dependency on energy-hungry air-conditioning.

We hope that this themed session in Bad Gleichenberg, Austria will offer a great first step in our conversations in this direction and that the SIG could move on to engage this topic and more in the immediate future.

## **Tourists: How the British went abroad to find themselves by Lucy Lethbridge (Bloomsbury 2022)**

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*A Blog from Jim Butcher which he really would like to share with the ATLAS community on an essay, review of a terrific book.*

Lucy Lethbridge has written a wonderful account of the evolution of the British tourist, from the early nineteenth century influx of British tourists to Paris following the end of the Napoleonic wars through to the package foreign holiday boom of the post-World War Two decades. As the sleeve note states: 'From portable cameras to postcards and suntans, *Tourists* explores how tourism has reflected changing attitudes to modernity and how, from the grand hotel to the campsite, the foreign holiday exposes deep fears, hopes and even longings for home.'

**If you want to read the entire essay, please feel free to visit:**

<https://jimbutcher.substack.com/p/tourists-how-the-british-went-abroad>

## Incorporating festivals and events into a destination tourism strategy

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### Abstract

Festivals and events have always been a key part of destination tourism strategies. In recent years, there has been an increasing convergence of tourism, economic and placemaking strategies to utilise events as tools for improving the quality of urban life. A growing number of destinations are taking a more strategic approach to the development of their event programmes to position themselves as 'eventful cities', which not only attract visitors, but also build social capital, support cultural development, strengthen city image and provide a catalyst for urban regeneration. This paper analyses the contribution of festival and event programmes to tourism strategies and wider urban development goals, based on case studies from Europe and Asia.

### Introduction

Festivals and events have become a core element of tourism development and marketing policies in many cities, regions and countries. They have provided a useful means of attracting tourists and putting places on the map. At the same time, however, events have important social, cultural and environmental impacts that can help to support wider development processes.

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies is a long-standing member of ATLAS, and is active in education, research and training programmes throughout Asia and beyond. They organised a UNWTO training programme on Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Through Festivals and Events, which introduced delegates to the relationship between events and sustainable tourism policy through an analysis of case studies from Europe and Asia. The development of this programme reflects the growing need for tourism professionals to understand the role of events as part of an overarching strategy to diversify the economy.

This first session on Incorporating festivals and events into a destination tourism strategy was led by **Greg Richards**, Professor of Placemaking and Events at Breda University in the Netherlands and **Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes** from the Macao Government Tourism Office. The discussion considered the following issues:

- Event policy – why develop events?
- Types of events and their effects
- Developing the event portfolio – which events to support?
- Practical examples of event portfolio development

## The growing importance of events as policy tools

Events can be used by destinations in many ways to support their development and marketing efforts, including growing the economy through event-induced spending, supporting social cohesion by using events as means for people to interact, building the image of the destination or supporting the cultural sector. In a tourism context, however, the most important function of events will be attracting visitors to particular places at certain times to strengthen tourist flows in the low season or to attract visitors to new areas.

Although tourism policy is often seen as being separate from other policy areas, it is important to consider events as more holistic tools that can affect all areas of the economy and society. Seeing events as multi-functional policy tools, rather than just a means of stimulating tourism or economic growth, provides far more benefits to cities and regions. For example, Richards and Palmer (2010) list several advantages of events as strategic development options for cities and regions:

- Providing a focus of attention

Events help to focus attention, including from the media and social media, on a particular place or a specific time period. This can be useful not just in attracting tourists, but also in persuading policy makers and stakeholders of the need for investment or development initiatives.

- Being a catalyst for change

Events can also be a useful means of initiating change, not just in the image of places, but also in how people identify with and relate to a place. Cities like Barcelona and Lille have used events very effectively to change their previously drab image, but also to persuade people of the need for change. When you stage a major event such as the Olympic Games or the European Capital of Culture, there is a deadline for people to work towards, and a time at which new facilities and orgware have to be ready.

- Synchronising political agendas

Setting a date for a major event can act as a catalyst for political agendas as well, putting political parties and social groups behind the need for change and a specific agenda of activities to secure that change. The idea of 'regime theory' emerged from the Atlanta Olympic Games, when a coalition was developed to support the initiative (Stone, 2005). This not only helped to win the bid for the Olympics, but also helped to support political collaboration on a range of other issues.

- Providing opportunities for redevelopment

In many cities there are sites that have lain derelict for years. Staging a major event can provide the impulse needed to redevelop and rejuvenate these areas. The 2012 Olympic Games in London were focussed on the redevelopment of former industrial land in East London, which is today the Queen Elizabeth Park. The park houses former Olympic facilities, such as the stadium and the velodrome, but it also provides open space and event venues for the local community and London as a whole.

- Potential for lower cost than iconic architecture

With iconic buildings and other infrastructure projects becoming increasingly expensive to build, events can offer a relatively affordable alternative. In many major events the event venues and facilities can also be designed for re-use, lowering costs as well as the environmental impact.

- Flexibility of events

Major buildings are fixed structures that are difficult to change. Events can provide a very flexible way of using space, and they can be moved around to prevent overcrowding or over-use of particular spaces.

- Timeliness of events

Events can be organised to coincide with significant moments in the life of a place. For example, the Dutch city of Den Bosch organised a programme of events to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the famous painter Hieronymus Bosch. This attracted over 2 million visits to this small city in 2016, as well as putting it on the global map through media coverage and increased flows of international tourists (Richards and Duif, 2019).

Events attract tourists, helping to support the local economy. In London, for example, leisure events were estimated to have a total impact of £2.8 billion pounds annually. Events not only attract visitors, but they can be good for the destination as a whole, helping to increase the quality of life. In Barcelona, for example, cultural tourism is seen as supporting cultural facilities, with tourists accounting for some 70% of all museum admissions. This not only provides local jobs, but also supports the cultural fabric of the city.

The cultural benefits of festivals and events go far beyond the basic staging of celebrations. Events and festivals are the backbone of cultural life in most cities and regions, and help to support cultural institutions and build cultural audiences. In many destinations, the festival calendar provides moments at which places can celebrate community and re-affirm their culture and identity, as the Macau case study below indicates. Among the social benefits that cities seek from staging events is an increase in social cohesion, giving people a sense of belonging to a community and a place.

Places can also derive image benefits from events, projecting an image of being attractive to visit. This was one of the major aims of the European Capital of Culture event staged by the Romanian city of Sibiu in 2007. As Romania had just joined the European Union, it was important to create awareness of the city and to position it as an attractive destination for international tourists. In this respect the event was very successful, attracting a large number of visitors in the ECOC year itself, but also generating flows of cultural tourism in the following years (Richards and Rotariu, 2015).

The experience of Glasgow is also a good example of how cities can change their image through events. In the 1970s Glasgow was a depressing place, suffering from deindustrialisation and the effects of economic restructuring. In the 1980s the city decided to reposition itself as a cultural hub and to project a more positive image. The first step was the 'Glasgow's miles better' marketing campaign, which heralded many of the positive changes that would transform the city from the 1990s onwards. Events were a central part of this strategy. In 1988 the Glasgow International Garden Festival was staged, helping to redevelop a derelict area of former docklands. This was followed by the 1990 European Capital of Culture, which had the central aim of improving the image of the city. In the longer term the city also built on this success by staging the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

In Edinburgh, research has shown that festivals attract visitors, but also make locals proud of their city and their identity. The Edinburgh Festivals cover a wide range of different events across the cultural spectrum, from the performing arts to music, film and traditional culture. The festivals not only support a large community of artists and performers, but also boost the image of the city and reinforce the role of Edinburgh as Scotland's capital city. The importance of these events to a wide range of stakeholders was reinforced during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the festivals were forced to go online and to find new ways of engaging with their audiences. There was a groundswell of popular support for the festivals, including large donations from corporate and private supporters (Richards & Leal Londoño, 2022).

In addition to cultural and social spin-offs, events can also act as hubs in different fields of social and economic activity. The role of 'Field Configuring Events' is particularly important in global networks in which knowledge is shared. People coming together for major global conferences and summits, such as the recent COP26 in Glasgow, make important decisions that attract worldwide media attention and help to put cities on the map.

Events are therefore used to support a variety of policy goals, including:

- Creating jobs and income
- Developing destination image
- Reducing seasonality
- Spreading tourist flows
- Creating social cohesion
- Supporting culture

A mix of events is usually needed to support these different types of aims. For example, sports events may help to generate media coverage and to stimulate the local population to take part in sport. Cultural events may help to support cultural facilities and generate greater social cohesion in the host region. Business or MICE events can help to support specific industry sectors, to exchange knowledge and know-how and to combat seasonality.

These benefits of event development are increasingly being harnessed by emerging economies as well. Recent years have seen a series of major events being staged in countries such as India (Commonwealth Games in 2010), Brazil (2014 FIFA Football World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics) and Qatar (2022 FIFA Football World Cup). These countries hope to capitalise on the image and tourism benefits of major events. However, as Getz (2012: 339) argues: 'staging an event will not automatically make the host destination more attractive to tourists'. Staging major events may also require considerable investment in facilities and expertise, and in the long run the costs may outweigh the benefits.

However, bearing in mind some of the comments about legacy and local community perceptions of sporting events, the decision-making process surrounding cities' bidding for major events is rarely a democratic or logical process, as Hiller (2004) comments:

"the decision to host the event is therefore a joint decision of community elites of which elected officials and the government in power are a part, but seldom is the decision to host the event the result of grass-roots democratic decision-making... as an act with economic motivations and consequences, there will also be socio-economic implications"

In many cases, the decision to bid for a major sporting or cultural event depends on the play of forces between government, the media and international sporting bodies. Each party will be keen to extract specific benefits from the event, and in order to succeed, each stakeholder needs to support of the others (Figure 1).

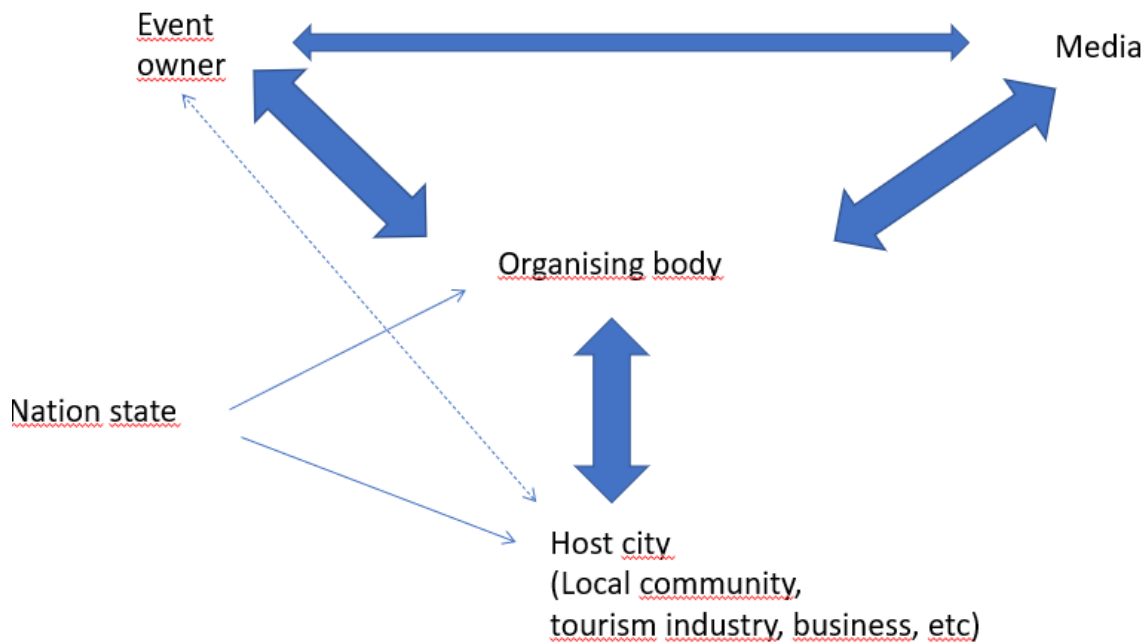


Figure 1: The event-city-media model (Rennen, 2007)

For many major global events there is a bidding process in place, which pits countries and cities against each for the privilege of staging the event. Over time, the costs of bidding and event lobbying have increased significantly, as Table 1 indicates. An important point to remember is that event bids can fail as well as succeed, even when considerable sums are spent on the bid.

Table 1: Event bidding costs

Location	Event	Bidding costs	Result
Chicago	2016 Olympics	\$100 million	Failed
Australia	2022 World Cup	\$49 million	Failed
London	2012 Olympics	\$25.5 million	Succeeded

Given the increasing costs of bidding and the uncertainty of the outcome, it is not surprising that cities have increasingly sought to develop their own events or to 'steal' existing events from other cities. A recent trend has been for 'city festivals' to be created which celebrate the culture of a specific city, such as Barcelona or Amsterdam. Recent examples of cities stealing existing events from each other include the transfer of the North Sea Jazz Festival from the Hague to Rotterdam, and the move of the Red Hair Days from Breda to Tilburg (van Aalst and Malik, 2012; Simons, 2019).

### Balancing risks and benefits – the event portfolio

One means of trying to balance the risks inherent in staging events is to develop an event portfolio that contains a mix of different types and sizes of events, which appeal to different audiences and market segments. In terms of event size, most of the events staged in a destination will be relatively small scale, and appeal mainly to local audiences. A smaller number of events will appeal to national or international tourists, and only a handful of events are likely to have a global appeal and media reach.



Figure 2: Structure of the event portfolio

The portfolio should also include a mix of different types of event content, to minimise the risks of staging a narrow range of event types. Andersson, Getz and Jutbring (2020) examine the event portfolio of Gothenburg, and analyse a number of key issues that cities and regions need to consider. In particular, they examine how the opportunities offered by staging particular types of events are balanced by the different levels of risk involved. Most destinations focus on instrumental effects such as “Economic impact” and “Image building” and also perceive risk in terms of “Negative media coverage”. *Local community involvement* is important in generating value by building social and cultural capital” but there is also a general risk if there is lack of broad community involvement. Event portfolios are also important for developing *relationships and interactions* between destinations and events, providing opportunities to bid for other events, although this is balanced by the strong risk of events moving to another destination. Andersson et al. (2020) also identify the *issue of fit* between the present portfolio and resources at the destination, which can be improved if the DMO extends contacts with special interest groups in the city. However, portfolios are complex to

manage portfolios, and require a strategic approach to planning and management so that worthwhile trade-offs can be made between value and risk.

### Examples of event policies

In **Northern Ireland**, the events policy aims to:

- Create a sustainable visitor inspired events future for Northern Ireland.
- Develop a progressive, diverse and cohesive events industry, attracting significant additional visitors and revenue
- Bid for and attract high profile, international scale events to Northern Ireland that showcase landscapes, cities and characters in a positive light to audiences around the world.
- Develop events with international appeal/profile 'hosted' in Northern Ireland and drive the Northern Ireland brand, demonstrating quality and authenticity.

Given the limited international tourism market for Northern Ireland, an important additional aim is to 'Create a culture of attending events within the domestic market.' As in many destinations, domestic visitors account for the bulk of event visitors, and therefore it is important not to overlook domestic tourism in event development policies.

In Scotland, a more strategic approach is evident, with an emphasis on attracting 'flagship events':

The principal criterion to determine whether an event should enter our flagship events gateway process is that it is internationally significant and aligns with 'Scotland The Perfect Stage', or supports our broader policy priorities. Fundamentally, the successful delivery of a small number of flagship events would demonstrate that Scotland is still functioning as a host for world class events.

Flagship events are based on extensive advance planning across multiple organisations. Prior to an event entering this process, confirmation would be required from local partners that they are bought into working on delivery of the event.

Actions of the **Scottish Government** in relation to events provide support to Scotland's tourism and events industry by:

- Sponsoring our national tourism organization, VisitScotland
- Working with public, private and third-sector partners to deliver the industry-led tourism strategy
- Providing support for tourism businesses
- Assisting with arranging meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions through ConventionScotland
- Supporting our partners in delivering the national events strategy Scotland: The Perfect Stage
- Securing, planning and delivering a programme of major events and festivals
- Funding the delivery of the national Themed Years and Winter Festivals programmes

### Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Many cities have developed comprehensive 'eventful city' or 'festival city' policies that are designed to maximise the benefits of events for the city. In the Dutch city of Rotterdam, festivals and events are seen as a means of achieving overall urban development goals, including supporting cultural regeneration, encouraging social cohesion and improving the image of the city. Events also provide an important stimulus for developing tourism to Rotterdam, which has long lived in the shadow of Amsterdam.

The origins of Rotterdam's development as a 'festival city' go back a long way, with events being central to the physical redevelopment programme following the destruction of the city centre in the Second World War (Richards & Palmer, 2010). A turning point in the development of Rotterdam as a festival city was the staging of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2001. The ECOC was also the trigger for establishing the Rotterdam Festivals organisation, with the body that ran the ECOC programme being re-purposed as an event management body for the city. The remit of Rotterdam Festivals was to oversee the portfolio of cultural events and the cultural agenda of the city, and to stimulate cultural participation among the citizens of Rotterdam. The event helped to produce a more positive cultural image for Rotterdam, among both tourists and locals (Richards and Wilson, 2004). The success of the ECOC also stimulated the creation Rotterdam Festivals as an umbrella body for cultural events in the city. The **mission** of Rotterdam Festivals is to coordinate Rotterdam's events policy and encourage culture participation of the citizens of Rotterdam. They provide a distinctive festival programme with events that are embraced by Rotterdammers (the people of Rotterdam), that reflect the themes of the city and deeply penetrate throughout the city and into the world. The **ambition** is to make Rotterdam the most engaging event city of The Netherlands, with a range of internationally appealing events. The city and her citizens form the most important source of inspiration for Rotterdam based events. Together, the events tell the story of Rotterdam - a key example of placemaking through events (de Brito & Richards, 2017).

Rotterdam Festivals developed a comprehensive events policy, called 'deeper in the city, further in the world' (2009). The underlying aims of the policy are to improve the quality of life, internationalisation, generating a higher return on festivals, establishing a stronger base for events with more focus, making Rotterdam an attractive city with a clear identity and building a stronger international profile:

What we (normally) do At Rotterdam Festivals we want everyone to enjoy the city's art and culture. Together with our partners (festival organisers, cultural institutions, educational institutions and entrepreneurs) we put together the most wonderful calendar in the Netherlands with festivals and events that say: 'Yes! This is Rotterdam!' This calendar includes events and festivals in every size or shape.

The development of the event portfolio and stronger event governance helped to boost tourism in the city, with a steady growth in visitor arrivals up to the Covid-19 pandemic.

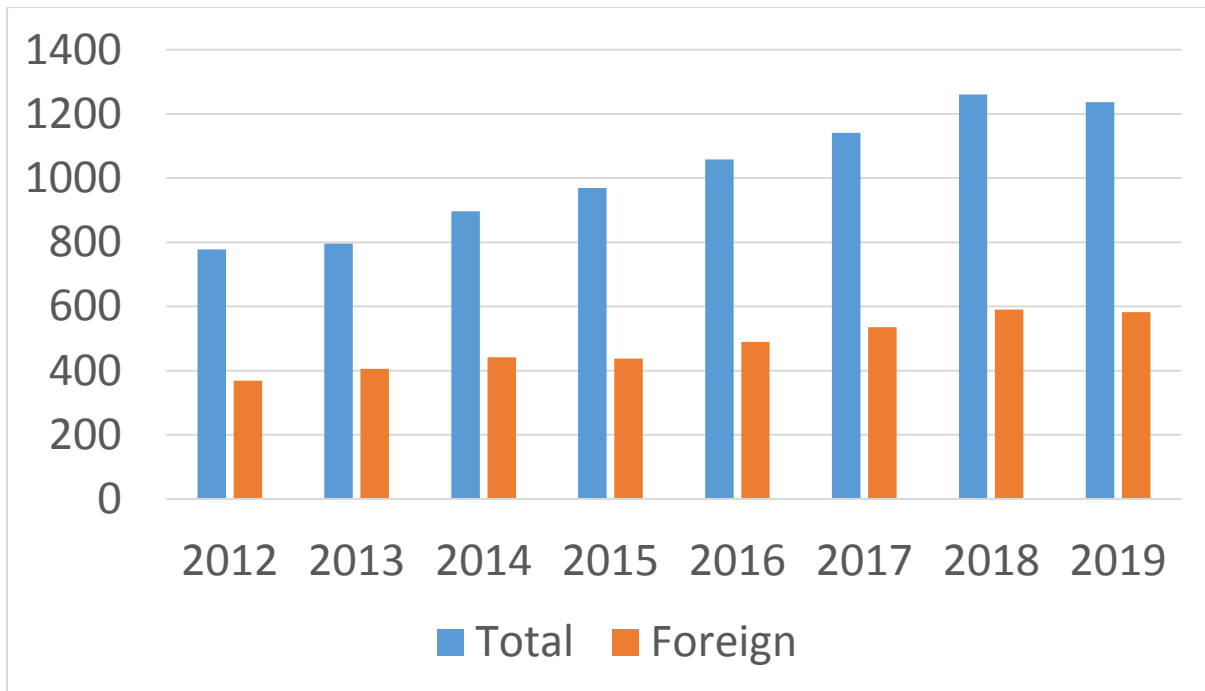


Figure 3: Visitor overnights (000s) in Rotterdam

The increasing visitor stream helped to strengthen the event economy, with a growth of over 80% in event turnover between 2011 and 2019.

Table 2: The impact of events in Rotterdam

	2011	2019
Turnover of events sector	€37.4 million	€67.9 million
Total jobs year round	242	1000
Jobs at height of season	4400	10900
Volunteers	4250	6900
Total visitors	3.7 million	4.2 million
Visitor spending	€190 million	€283 million

Source: Braun (2019)

The growing role of events in the city is underlined by the growing event audience, which has now overtaken attendance at the fixed cultural attractions in the city.

## Event and museum visitors Rotterdam

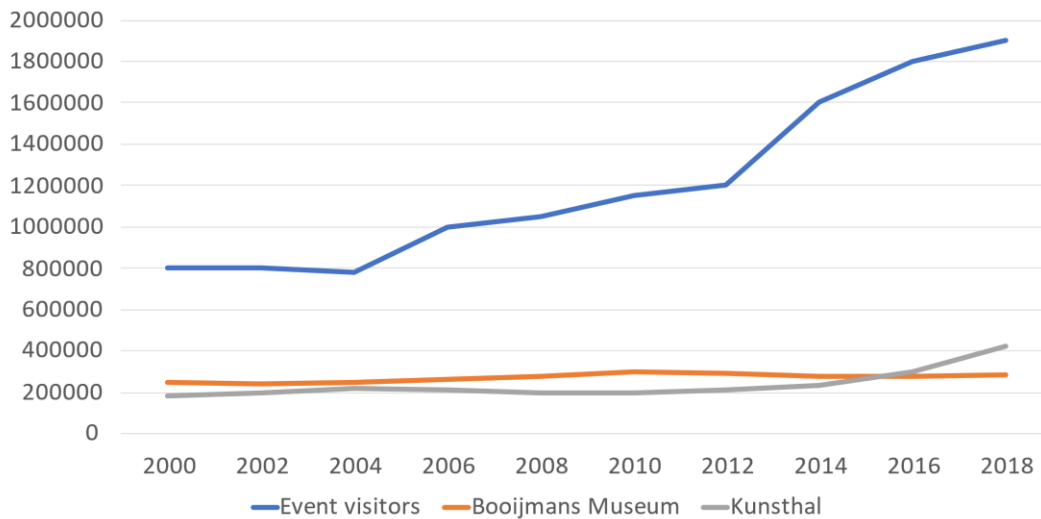


Figure 3: Event and museum visitors in Rotterdam

These examples illustrate a few of the advantages of event-based tourism development policies, which Richards and Palmer (2010) summarize as:

- Events can form an important support for a well-structured tourism policy
- Events can attract diverse audiences
- Events can help combat seasonality
- Events can help to build a destination brand
- Events are more flexible than built attractions.

### Macao as an eventful city

In order to attract visitors to come and return it is important to develop a varied events portfolio across the whole year. Macao has a diverse portfolio that includes sports, culture and technology events. Various departments of the Macao SAR Government, local community associations and even business entities organise a series of events throughout the year, including Dragon Boat Festival, Easter and Christmas festivals, turning festivities into events. These include celebrations of Lunar New Year or Chinese New Year, when dragon dance performances can be enjoyed throughout the city. During these public holidays shops are closed and people usually stay at home, so events help to bring people out on the street and spend money in local businesses.

The challenge is to extend the events from stand alone events to encompass a greater time span. Ten years ago, the MGTO decided to add another event to Chinese New Year, creating a specially designed parade. Activities in different parts of the city help to spread tourist revenue. There are 15 parade floats, 700 performers and 800 staff. The MGTO helps in bringing groups in from Mainland China to perform. Over 50,000 people attended the two parades in 2022. During the pandemic the celebrations focussed on the local community, including migrant communities. The celebrations are broadcast on TV and social media, attracting a large online audience. The events provide a visual spectacle, including parades, fireworks and dancing.

The International Dragon Boat Races are organised by the Sports Bureau. They originated from traditional festivities, but have now been developed into a sports event for the region. The event combines sports, culture, and community celebrations into 'one big carnival' – including workshops for kids in the dragon boat races. Educational activities are also aimed to sustain culture in the community.

There are also large sports events in the Macao portfolio, including the Macao Grand Prix, a Formula 3 street race. Billed as the 'Monaco of the East', this attracts international racers and media coverage. The event, held once a year, will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> edition in 2023. One challenge is to extend the momentum of an annual event. To help with this, the Macao Grand Prix Museum was remodelled and extended to cover 16.000 m<sup>2</sup>, with Augmented Reality (AR), educational facilities and a Grand Prix themed cafe. This has helped to extend the Grand Prix effect year-round.

The Macao International Marathon also attracts people from around the world, and can cater for 12,000 participants. Other regular events include the Macao Arts Festival, Art Biennale and International Music Festival. The Macao Light Festival was created in 2015 providing evening events to extend visitor stay in Macao. Light installations and projection mapping highlighted different buildings as backdrops to spread visitors during the one-month festival. The Light Festival helps in breaking through the gloom in winter, and during the pandemic it provided socially distanced experiences outdoors. There is now a collaboration of light projections between cities. For example, Changsha was invited to 'perform' in Macao.

During the Pandemic a 'Light Up Macao Drone Gala' was organised to stimulate the nighttime economy and boost tourism. Synchronized performances by hundreds of drones generated a lot of social media coverage and for the physical event each of the four nights attracted 10,000 more visitors than normally frequented the venue. There were also almost one million people watching via TV and social media, and participating in online games. Synergies were created by allowing people to scan different images to get coupons to spend in local businesses, generating a second wave of activity.

Macao is also making use of AR to provide more animation. The Rua dos Ervanários ("Herbalists' Street") is using AR technology to promote "technology + tourism". There are three AR activities entitled "time travel portal", "flowers in full bloom", and "capture the moment", which are linked to discounts and lucky draws offered by shops. This event is designed to appeal to the predominantly younger profile of Mainland Chinese visitor. The experience of Macao mirrors that of its larger neighbour Hong Kong, which has successfully used festivals as an engine to drive tourism growth. A study by Richards and King (2022) shows that Hong Kong has been able to increase cultural tourism demand by staging cultural events at different times of year and in different locations around the city.

## Conclusions

This brief introduction to the relationship between tourism and events shows that events can provide a flexible tool to support tourism development and marketing. However, it must be emphasised that simply staging events in no guarantee of success. Cities and regions need to think holistically and strategically about their event development if they wish to become 'eventful' and attract significant visitor numbers and generate economic, social and cultural effects. As the example from Macau and elsewhere show, this requires a structured approach that brings together stakeholders from the public and private sectors and from different areas of the economy. Generating these effects also requires a long-term commitment, because the legacies of event programmes are only likely to become evident over a period of years, if not decades.

## Acknowledgements

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# ATLAS Prize for Bachelor and Master thesis on Leisure and Tourism

## ATLAS thesis prize 2023

The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) has created the annual ATLAS Prize for Master and Bachelor theses on leisure and tourism. Nominations were made by Heads of Department / School from ATLAS Member institutions, In addition, theses produced by ATLAS student members were also considered.

Nominations were reviewed between May and September 2023 by the ATLAS Advisory Board and we now have 4 prize winners, 2 master and 2 bachelor students!

## ATLAS Master thesis prize 2023

For the Master thesis prize we received 9 interesting nominations.

The thesis of **Eva Joyce** from the Linnaeus University in Sweden integrates Foucauldian and socialist ecofeminist theories into a multi-level discourse analysis of 35 online news media articles (2017-2022) on rewilding tourism from 8 trusted news outlets in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. This very well structured thesis is based on an extensive literature review, which is both critical and eloquent, and makes both a theoretical and practical contribution to understanding how tourism discourses influence rewilding's practical role in supporting biodiversity and environmental restoration. The thesis topic is very well researched and the writing style is sophisticated

**Suleidys María Rodríguez Barrios** from the Spanish Universitat Rovira i Virgili examined in her thesis the presence of the term "Sustainability" in the social media branding of 8 Spanish Coastal Destinations. For this interesting project 22044 tweets over a 5-year period from 2018 to March 2022 were analyzed by means of 22 keywords. The research revealed that even though sustainability in branding is a tool to strengthen the image of a destination based on trust, only 25% of the content of all tweets was aimed at sustainability.

**Ruan Klerk Henning** from the University of Pretoria (South Africa) investigated the phenomenon of urban tourism in the global South and its impact in both the City of Cape Town, a coastal urban destination and legislative capital of South Africa, and the City of Tshwane, an inland urban destination and administrative capital of South Africa. Through the use of an extensive range of primary and secondary sources (literature, documents, statistics) the study produced comprehensive evidence of Cape Town's strategy to tourism development and planning. This interesting thesis underscored that urban tourism can indeed be used as a tool for development and address poverty issues in the global South, with particular emphasis to the southern African region.

The thesis of **Jess Porritt** of the University of Westminster (UK) examines the role of endurance running in the creation of transformational eventscaapes. Using a broadly

phenomenological approach, this study focuses on the interactions between participants, activity, and space to create transformation in the context of endurance running. Triangulated mixed methods including surveys, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured observations gained multiple perspectives on participant experiences. Four main themes of participant experience were identified; community, personal challenge, perspective shift, and self-actualisation. These themes both contribute to transformation and act as evidence of its occurrence. Furthermore this study posits that transformation occurs as a result of the equal interaction between participant, place, and space. The three factors are interlinked and in many ways interdependent as transformation would not be possible without all three aspects. Her findings are original and well communicated, theoretical relevance is clear, but social relevance remains undiscussed.

**Angela Dimitrova** of Breda University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands) deals with the development of online leisure practices by players of Elder Scrolls Online, one of the most popular Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG). Her research explores the role of events and festivals in developing MMORPG communities. She used content analysis and netnography of digital feeds and chats from the game as well as participant observations of actual game play. More depth was added by carrying out interviews with players, selected through criterion-based sampling. This multi-faceted approach helped to reveal many interesting insights into the nature of the Elder Scroll practices. Angela's thesis deals with an original topic in leisure and event studies, which clearly addresses a gap in the literature in a convincing way. Conclusions tightly connecting theory and practice. The thesis is written in an interesting and engaging way and shows a remarkable level of academic writing and analysis.

The thesis of **Anna Kurowska** at the Technological University of the Shannon (Ireland) examines the perceptions of host communities of the impact of tourism on the cultural identity of residents in Lisbon, Portugal. She employed a mixed methods approach to research utilizing a questionnaire with a representative sample of residents in Lisbon and interviews with key informants. Findings revealed that the perceptions of tourism amongst residents of Lisbon were overwhelmingly positive despite the communities having been exposed to the effects of the commodification process and being affected by a housing shortage leading to displacement of residents. Her study calls for genuine and robust enhancements concerning the level of residents' engagement in policy planning and implementation process as part of post pandemic recovery of tourism in Lisbon.

**Justine Bauters** of Breda University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands) examined the premises, challenges, and possibilities of regenerative tourism for DMOs and the potential sustainable tourism can offer communities in the aftermath of the Covid crisis. Data was collected through qualitative methods including document analysis, interviews, and focus groups. Based on the results of her study, focusing on one particular destination, Justine proposes a number of managerial for DMOs when they aim to implement regenerative tourism on the destination.

The thesis of **Johanna Bach** (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands) examined the ways co-creation affect the event experience of creative entrepreneurs in the specific case of the Cologne Carnival. The study applied a qualitative approach and performed semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of sixteen creative entrepreneurs from various creative sectors in Cologne Carnival. Based on a thorough literature review and analysis Johanna concludes that co-creation affects affective, cognitive, and physical event engagement and the experience of novelty of the creative entrepreneurs in the event.

Finally, **Sadh Sathawattey** (University of Pannonia, Hungary) uses the SERVQUAL methodology to examine the service quality of Hungarian hotels as perceived by their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 150 online surveys were distributed, of

which 102 were deemed suitable for data analysis. The results indicated that there is a strong relationship between employee perception of service quality and the overall satisfaction. The last result also indicated that there is a strong relationship between employee perception of service quality and the loyalty as well.

The quality of the nine theses was high. After careful consideration, the Jury has decided to award the ATLAS 2023 Master thesis first prize to **Eva Joyce**. The jury also highly commended **Angela Dimitrova** (second prize).

### **ATLAS Bachelor thesis prize 2023**

For the Bachelor thesis prize we received four very different projects.

In the first project four Belgian students (**Timo Beke, Sofie Vonckx, Elli Yanna Verheyen and Line Labaere**) present their marketing and financial plan for Adventure Photography. A detailed example of a Wildlife Photography tour illustrates their ideas. Although the project stands out for its originality and creativity, it lacks a thorough (literature) study to substantiate the plans.

The study of **Valeria Shikalepo** from Namibia focuses on the challenge of implementing a dual apprenticeship in the Zambezi region. This well executed research, based on a mixed methods approach, has a clear practical relevance. However, the data are based on a small sample and results have limited relevance beyond the specific case of Namibia.

**Aaron Godfrey** from Ireland looked at emotional intelligence in resilient leadership, a topic rarely tackled by students because of its complexity. The research project builds on a well-executed literature review and research design. Interesting questions were asked which yielded some insightful and original data. The data is presented in multiple forms, which heightens interest and allows for a full exploration of the important findings. The analysis chapter provides an intelligent and critical summary of the data too. The work is very concise and clearly written. It is carefully structured and flows well.

Finally **Radina Shikova** from Bulgaria looked at the role of nature-based tourism during the COVID-19 period. Her thesis is well structured and written and findings rest on a well elaborated theoretical (using practice theory) and methodological framework. Research results are interesting and support findings elsewhere on the consequences of COVID 19 for (nature- based) tourism.

Based on careful considerations, the jury has decided to award the ATLAS 2023 Bachelor first prize to **Aaron Godfrey**. The jury also highly commended **Radina Shikova** (second prize).

## ATLAS members

October 2023

At the moment ATLAS has 150 members in 48 countries.

### **Austria**

Fachhochschule Kufstein Tirol Bildungs GmbH  
FH JOANNEUM University of Applied Sciences  
IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems

### **Belgium**

Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Sciences and Arts  
KU Leuven  
Thomas More Mechelen  
Université Libre de Bruxelles

### **Botswana**

University of Botswana

### **Brazil**

Unesco Chair in Creative Economy & Public Policies - CEPP

### **Bulgaria**

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"  
University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy

### **Chile**

Universidad de La Frontera

### **China**

City University of Macau  
Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM)  
Shanghai Institute of Tourism  
Sun Yat-sen University

### **Colombia**

Corporacion Universitaria Americana  
Universidad Externado de Colombia  
Universidad Surcolombiana USCO

### **Croatia**

Aspira College  
Institute for Tourism  
University of Rijeka  
University of Zadar

### **Cyprus**

Bahçeşehir Cyprus University  
Cyprus University of Technology  
Cyprus West University  
University of Mediterranean Karpasia

### **Czech Republic**

AMBIS University  
Charles University  
Masaryk University, FEA  
Prague University of Economics and Business  
University College of Business in Prague

**Denmark**

Aalborg University  
Roskilde University

**Ecuador**

Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ

**Finland**

HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences  
LAB University of Applied Sciences  
Lapland University of Applied Sciences  
Novia University of Applied Sciences  
South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences  
University of Lapland

**France**

Rennes School of Business  
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

**Germany**

DHBW Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg  
Harz University of Applied Sciences  
Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences

**Hungary**

2q kkt  
Budapest Metropolitan University  
University of Pannonia

**India**

Institute of Business Management

**Iran**

Islamic Azad University

**Ireland**

Atlantic Technological University (Galway)  
Dundalk Institute of Technology  
Munster Technological University  
TU Dublin  
TUS Athlone Campus  
Ulster University  
University of Limerick

**Israel**

Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee

**Italy**

Università Bocconi Milano  
Università della Calabria  
University Ca' Foscari Venezia  
University of Bergamo  
University of Padova

**Kazakhstan**

Abay Myrzakhmetov Kokshetau University

**Kenya**

Kisii University  
Moi University

**Latvia**

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

**Malaysia**

Universiti Malaysia Sabah  
University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF)

**Malta**

EEC-ITIS Malta Tourism and Languages Institute

**Mexico**

Autonomous University of Oaxaca "Benito Juárez"  
Universidad Anáhuac Cancún  
Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero  
Universidad de las Américas Puebla  
University of Quintana Roo

**Namibia**

Namibia University of Science and Technology

**Nepal**

The Nepal Trust

**Netherlands**

Breda University of Applied Sciences  
Erasmus University Rotterdam  
HZ University of Applied Sciences  
InHolland University of Applied Sciences  
NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences  
Wageningen University  
Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

**New Zealand**

University of Otago

**Nigeria**

Empire Travel Services Ltd

**Norway**

University of Stavanger

**Poland**

Jagiellonian University  
University of Lodz  
Vistula School of Hospitality  
WSB University in Gdansk

**Portugal**

ESHTE (Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo do Estoril)  
IGOT – Ullisboa  
Inst. Sup. Ciências Empresariais e do Turismo (ISCET)  
Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra (IPC)  
ISAL - Institute of Tourism, Administration and Languages  
Polytechnic Institute of Beja  
Polytechnic Institute of Leiria  
Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo  
Universidade da Maia  
Universidade de Aveiro  
UTAD - Universidade de Tras-os-Montes e Alto Douro

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Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca  
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**Slovakia**

Matej Bel University

**Slovenia**

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**South Africa**

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Universidad Complutense de Madrid  
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University of Girona  
University Rovira i Virgili

**Sweden**

Dalarna University  
Linnaeus University  
Lund University  
Mid Sweden University

**Switzerland**

University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons

**Turkey**

Cyprus Science University  
Eastern Mediterranean University  
Futureisland Vocational Center of Cyprus  
Mardin Artuklu University  
World Peace University Nicosia

**Uganda**

Jimmy Sekasi Institute of Catering  
Kabale University  
Makerere University

**United Arab Emirates**

Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management  
Zayed University

**United Kingdom**

Canterbury Christ Church University  
Cardiff Metropolitan University  
Edinburgh Napier University  
Leeds Beckett University  
Nottingham Trent University  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Swansea University  
TRAM - Tourism Research and Marketing  
University College Birmingham  
University of Brighton

University of Derby  
University of Greenwich  
University of Lincoln  
University of Surrey  
University of Westminster

**United States of America**

Texas A&M University  
University of New Haven

## **ATLAS student members**

October 2023

At the moment ATLAS has 18 student members from 12 countries.

## **ATLAS events**

### **Events organised between September 2022 and October 2023**

ATLAS Annual Conference 2022  
Tourism 22 and Beyond - What Matters Now to the Global Tourist?  
Cork, Ireland  
September 6-9, 2022

ATLAS Africa UPCT  
LIVING LIVE PROJECTS  
Webinar  
University of Pretoria Campus Tours  
November 7, 2022

ATLAS Latin America Conference  
New challenges for tourism in Latin America  
Bogota, Colombia  
November 17-18, 2022

ATLAS Members' meeting and Social Coffee  
ONLINE  
November 22, 2022

CBTS - Rural Tourism Prosperity: Transforming the Well-Being of Local Communities  
ATLAS Asia as supporting partner  
HYBRID - Sabah, Malaysia  
December 2, 2022

Critical Tourism Studies - Asia Pacific Conference  
Tourism Metamorphosis: Creative Destruction and the Remaking of Tourism Geographies  
ATLAS Asia as supporting partner  
Vietnam, Hanoi  
February 13-17, 2023

ATLAS Webinar SIG Circular Economy  
Launching the SIG on Circular Economy and Circularity in the Space of Tourism and Hospitality  
ONLINE  
March 31, 2023

ATLAS SIG Gastronomy and Tourism Meeting  
Tradition and innovation in gastronomy  
Sibiu, Romania  
May 24-27, 2023

CultSense & ATLAS SIG Cultural Tourism Conference  
Bridging Cultures through Travel: From theory to practice  
Rotterdam, Netherlands  
June 14-15, 2023

ATLAS SIG Tourism Education Webinar  
Inspiring and Engaging Tourism Students post Covid  
July 12, 2023

ATLAS Annual Conference 2023  
Quality of Life: Health, Tourism and Climate  
Bad Gleichenberg, Austria  
October 10-13, 2023

### **Future events**

ATLAS Africa Student Webinar  
Tourism and Cultural Diversity: The UPCT way  
November 8, 2023

ATLAS SIG Business Tourism Conference  
Business Tourism and The New Normal  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands  
November 15-17, 2023

ATLAS SIG Gastronomy and Tourism Meeting  
Gastronomy and food tourism policies: a hand-in-hand agreement for the future?  
Sintra, Portugal  
2024

ATLAS Latin America Conference  
Guerrero, Mexico  
2024

ATLAS Middle East Webinar  
The Afterlife of Mega Events. Measuring Impacts and Outcomes in the Middle East  
March 2024

ATLAS Annual Conference 2024  
Leisure & Tourism 2030: Navigating the Future  
Breda, Netherlands  
June 25-28, 2024

ATLAS CTS-AP Conference  
Hainan, China  
January, 2025

ATLAS Annual Conference 2025  
Tourist destinations at a crossroads  
Space, community, products, politics and evolutionary processes in the age of transitions  
Tarragona, Spain  
June 2025

ATLAS Annual Conference 2026  
Collaboration, Community and Co-creation  
Leeds, United Kingdom  
September 2026

ATLAS Annual Conference 2027 (to be confirmed)  
Viana do Castelo, Portugal  
2027

**ATLAS Annual Conference 2023**  
**Quality of Life: Health, Tourism and Climate**  
**Bad Gleichenberg, Austria**  
**October 10-13, 2023**



Bad Gleichenberg is located in the southeast of Styria, nestled in rolling hills, surrounded by vineyards, and surrounded by seven thermal spas. Located in the destination “Styrian Thermal and Volcanic Land ([www.thermen-vulkanland.at/en](http://www.thermen-vulkanland.at/en)), the campus of FH JOANNEUM Bad Gleichenberg is the ideal place to study topics of health, well-being, sports, and tourism. Around 360 students appreciate the family atmosphere, the high quality of life and study, and the region's culinary offerings. Like the bachelor's and master's degree programs on offer, the conference theme also fits in perfectly with the gentle hilly landscape and mild climate.

**Quality of Life: Health, Tourism, and Climate**

The ATLAS Conference 2023 is intended to provide a multi-perspective view of tourism and its relation to a wide range of burning contemporary issues. It means to address such questions as:

- How does tourism impact the quality of life of those who work within the industry and the people in the communities in it?
- How are health and tourism-related—not just in the context of health and medical tourism, but also in connection with ways in which tourism may be health-promoting (or not)?
- How can the economic health of communities, particularly demographically and infrastructurally disadvantaged ones, for example, in rural areas, be enhanced by tourism?
- How will climate change impact the health of the tourism industry?
- What is necessary for “healthy” tourism development?

**Workshop themes**

- Innovations for Sustainable Tourism Networks
- Resilience for Healthy Destinations
- Reduction of Complexity in Destination Management
- Design Thinking for Authentic Product Development

- What do Consumers want? Generational Values and Preferences
- Climate-friendly Tourism Products: Hype, Greening, or Innovation?
- Mindful Hospitality
- Sustainable Events and Quality of Life
- A healthy destination is a sustainable destination

The conference is completely HYBRID and we expect 75 delegated visiting Bad Gleichenberg and we will welcome at least 35 delegates ONLINE.



**More information on the ATLAS events at:**  
**[www.atlas-euro.org](http://www.atlas-euro.org)**

**ATLAS SIG Business Tourism Conference  
Business Tourism and The New Normal  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands  
November 15-17, 2023**

A message from Rob Davidson, Visiting Fellow at the University of Greenwich and Managing Director of MICE Knowledge. ([www.miceknowledge.com](http://www.miceknowledge.com))

On behalf of the ATLAS Business Tourism Special Interest Group, it is my great pleasure to invite you to the 2023 ATLAS Business Tourism conference from 15 to 17 November 2023 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where our hosts will be MBO College Centrum, located in the historic heart of the city.

The ATLAS Business Tourism conference is an annual event, operating under the auspices of ATLAS, The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research ([www.atlas-euro.org](http://www.atlas-euro.org)). Since 2004, it has become the most important international annual forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of best practice in teaching and researching this subject. The theme of this year's conference will be:

**Business Tourism and The New Normal**

In 2023, our world continues in a state of turbulence and transformation, shaken by the impacts of the global Covid pandemic and the consequences of an illegal war in Europe, as well as rapid and far-reaching changes in the technological, economic, demographic and social aspects of our lives.

Even as we enter a period of recovery from the most extreme impacts of the pandemic, business tourism has not returned to the pre-pandemic normal. Hybrid business events are a key characteristic of the New Normal. And business tourism destinations, venues and meeting planners are now obliged, more than ever, to demonstrate the value of the face-to-face experience in business events. Sustainability and the social legacy of business events have assumed greater significance. And the distinction between business tourism and leisure travel is fading as witnessed by the rise of 'Bleisure' worldwide.

Within the program of the ATLAS SIG Business Tourism Conference, on Thursday November 16<sup>th</sup>, there will be a special student event, **Business Events Leaders of Tomorrow**, which is open to bachelor or masters students at any university. Students may participate in this event either as a member of a class group as part of their curriculum, or as an individual.

The Amsterdam Convention Bureau considers education in the field of business tourism to be very important and sees the importance of investing in new talent in this industry. That is why they are happy to offer 5 students from European universities scholarships the opportunity to participate in this conference for free.

**More information on the ATLAS events at:**  
[www.atlas-euro.org](http://www.atlas-euro.org)

**ATLAS Annual Conference 2024**  
**Leisure & Tourism 2030: Navigating the Future**  
**Breda, Netherlands**  
**June 25-28, 2024**

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda sets out a global framework to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and fix climate change by 2030. The UNWTO has also defined a clear and consistent sector-wide message and approach to climate action in the coming decade, aligned with the wider scientific framework and urgency to act now. In the light of this agenda, it is essential to stay ahead of the curve to succeed. The ATLAS Annual Conference 2024 “Leisure & Tourism 2030: Navigating the Future” aims to bring together researchers, educators and innovators to explore the future of leisure and tourism, and how we can adapt to meet the changing landscape. The conference will cover topics such as the impact of technology on travel, the rise of sustainability in leisure and tourism, societal impacts, and the changing preferences of consumers. We’ll also focus on emerging trends and opportunities, such as the growing interest in (designing) experiences and the rise of niche markets. Through engaging keynote speeches, parallel sessions, interactive panels, and networking opportunities, participants will gain valuable insights into the future of leisure and tourism, and how they can prepare for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. (2020). *Tourism and water: Interactions, impacts and challenges*. Channel View Publications.

UNWTO. (2018, 2019). *Tourism Highlights 2018, 2019 Edition*. UNWTO.

Buhalis, D., & Sinarta, Y. M. (2020). Real-time co-creation and nowness service: lessons from tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Travel Research*, 0047287520964397.

Amelung, B., Nicholls, S., Viner, D., & Aall, C. (Eds.). (2017). *Towards sustainable tourism: Possible directions for a new world*. Springer.

Zhang, J., Gao, J., Li, X., & Song, H. (2020). Exploring the tourism destination image and brand personality relationship: a study of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, China. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 17, 100429.

Higham, J. E., & Hinch, T. (2018). Tourism and planetary health: A call for action. *Journal of Travel Research*, 0047287518771470.

UNWTO. (2021). *UNWTO Tourism Towards 2030, Global Report on Future Tourism*. UNWTO.

Sigala, M., Christou, E., & Gretzel, U. (2021). *Advances in Tourism Marketing and Management: Future Tourism and Hospitality Industry: Challenges and Opportunities*. Routledge.

The main theme of the conference is:

**Leisure & Tourism 2030: Navigating the Future**

We welcome abstracts in the following areas:

1. Sustainability in Leisure & Tourism: How to Build a Greener Future – exploring practical ways to incorporate sustainable practices into leisure and tourism, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and preserving natural resources.
2. The Future of Technology in Leisure & Tourism: Innovations and Opportunities – focusing on emerging technologies that are changing the industry, such as virtual and augmented reality, blockchain, and AI. How can these technologies be applied in leisure and tourism and how they will shape the future.
3. Adapting to Changing Consumer Preferences – exploring how traveler preferences in leisure and tourism are changing in the post-pandemic era, such as increased interest in off-the-beaten-path destinations, local experiences, events, and outdoor activities. How can businesses adapt to meet these changing preferences.

4. Designing Memorable Experiences – focusing on the importance of creating unique and memorable experiences for consumers, such as immersive cultural experiences, adventure tourism, and events. How to design and market these experiences to attract and retain consumers.
5. Tourism and Workforce Skills Development – examining the role of leisure and tourism in creating job opportunities, and the importance of providing training and career advancement opportunities for leisure and tourism workers. Exploring ways to promote fair and equitable working conditions in the industry.
6. Placemaking and Destination Branding – focusing on how destinations can use placemaking and branding strategies to create a unique identity that attracts visitors while maintaining the character and authenticity of the destination. Exploring ways to involve residents in the process of destination branding and placemaking.
7. Leisure and tourism growth and local livability – focusing on the challenges and opportunities of balancing leisure and tourism growth with local livelihoods in destinations. As tourism continues to grow, it can bring significant economic benefits to destinations, but it can also have negative social impacts on local communities, such as overcrowding, increased living costs, and displacement of local residents.

### Conference Venue

Situated in the South of the Netherlands, in the city of Breda, Breda University of Applied Sciences (called “BUAS” hereinafter) is a premier higher education institution with about 7,500 students from over 60 countries. The University was founded in 1966 as an institute offering management programmes in tourism and leisure and conducting research in this field.

BUAS’s unique approach and teaching and research outlook, proactively combined with an effective international classroom experience has gone a long way in developing an ideal learning environment for its students. BUAS offers 17 bachelor & 12 master’s Programmes in a wide variety of disciplines: Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure, Gaming, Logistics, and Media.



Since its inception, the institute has received several notable awards for its excellence in teaching and innovative programmes. Almost all of NHTV’s Bachelor Programmes were awarded with the highest ranks in the Dutch National Student Survey. The institute has received international accreditations from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO/TedQual), the World Leisure Organization, and The International Facility Management Association. BUAs has been consistently ranked amongst the Top 30 Global Institutions in the QS Subject Rankings for Hospitality & Leisure around the world.

BUAs collaborates with a wide variety of partners. In the Netherlands we are one of the three core members of CELTH, the national Centre of Expertise in the sector of leisure, tourism, and hospitality. The Dutch government engages with this center to identify trends and developments in the hospitality and tourism sectors and initiates cooperation between industry and education. BUAs is accredited by the THE-ICE which is the International Centre of Excellence in Hospitality & Tourism Education (see <https://the-ice.org>), which has members in Switzerland, France, Australia, The Philippines, UAE, Qatar, Taiwan and Fiji amongst other countries. Our programmes are also certified by the United National World Tourism

Organization's (UNWTO) through its TedQual process. In addition to also being an Affiliate member of UNWTO, we are also a member of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

Our innovations are award-winning on a global level, such as the development of the Carmacal Carbon Calculator, which was recognized with a WTTC Award in 2016, and a UNWTO Award in 2018. We also offer executive education and masterclasses to large and small organizations in tour guiding, sustainable tourism and ecotourism, digital tourism, social impacts of tourism and other areas.

BUAS has experience in organizing international conferences and is equipped with all the amenities and infrastructure required to host an event of this size.

Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAs) offers its students plenty of opportunities to pursue their dreams in a small-scale and international study environment. Between 2016 and 2020, the campus along the Mgr. Hopmansstraat was fully redesigned and renovated, as well as expanded by the acquisition of the adjacent monastery. This former monastery is now the base of the Academy of Tourism. We think the delegates will be really impressed with the building and its facilities.

The campus itself is modern and spacious, with a range of facilities that are designed to meet the needs of visitors and students. The classrooms are equipped with the latest technology, and there are plenty of spaces for workers and students to work individually or in groups. The library is well-stocked and offers a quiet and peaceful space for students to work, while the various cafeterias and restaurants provide a range of delicious and healthy food options.

## **Breda**

BUAS is located in the city of Breda, a beautiful city located in the southern part of the Netherlands, known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and scenic beauty. Breda has many benefits, including:

- **Excellent location:** Breda is located at the crossroads of major European cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Brussels. This makes it an ideal place to live for those who like to travel and explore new places.
- **Rich history:** Breda has a long and fascinating history dating back to the 12th century. It was once the home of the Dutch royal family and is still filled with historic landmarks and beautiful architecture.
- **Cultural hub:** Breda is a thriving cultural hub with numerous museums, art galleries, theaters, and music venues. There are always events and festivals happening in the city, providing residents with endless entertainment options.
- **Scenic beauty:** Breda is situated in a beautiful natural setting, surrounded by lush forests and picturesque countryside. The city also has many parks and green spaces, making it a great place to enjoy the outdoors.
- **High quality of life:** Breda consistently ranks as one of the best places to live in the Netherlands. The city has excellent schools, healthcare facilities, and public transportation. It also has a low crime rate, making it a safe and secure place to stay.

Overall, Breda is a wonderful city with many benefits for visitors and residents. Its location, history, culture, natural beauty, and high quality of life make it an ideal place to work, live and visit.

**More information on the ATLAS events at:**

**[www.atlas-euro.org](http://www.atlas-euro.org)**

## ATLAS Special Interest Groups – Reports

The current SIGs (Special Interest Groups) are on:

1. Cultural Tourism
2. Gastronomy and Tourism
3. Business Tourism
4. Events
5. Volunteer Tourism
6. Dark Tourism
7. Heritage Tourism and Education
8. Space, Place, Mobilities in Tourism
9. Urban Tourism
10. Visual Tourism
11. Climate Change and Tourism
12. Tourism Education
13. Circular Economy and Circularity in the Space of Tourism and Hospitality
14. Artificial Intelligence and Tourism

### A word from the SIG coordinator

*Jane Turner*  
*Leeds Beckett University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[jane.turner@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:jane.turner@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

2023 has been a busy year for the ATLAS Special Interest Groups (SIGs). In my first year as the Special Interest Group Coordinator, I have met with individual coordinators and supported activities and the portfolio of SIGs that ATLAS has to offer. During the year we have also seen the creation of new mailing lists for all SIGs hosted on JISMAIL to help make communication easier.

The reports that follow provide just a snapshot of the great work and activities that have taken place. It is clear that the global membership of academics, researchers and students has helped in creating and maintaining vibrant and active communities.

The variety of in-person and virtual sessions that have taken place is impressive. With international conferences, peer reviewed publications and curated collections for leading academic journals, regular SIG meetings, active research and data collection, in addition to a range of online webinars are just some examples of the activities that have taken place. In March we saw the official online launch of the Circular Economy and Circularity in the Space of Tourism and Hospitality. Whilst in July our latest SIG, focussed upon Artificial Intelligence and Tourism, was also launched.

Currently, with 13 SIGs, the range of subject disciplines represented is broad, but with the establishment of more groups in the pipeline, there is still scope to broaden our offering further. Please do get in touch with me direct if you are interested in establishing a new SIG and we chat through any ideas that you have. You can contact me direct at [jane.turner@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:jane.turner@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all coordinators who voluntarily offer their time to run the ATLAS SIGs and to all members who have participated in this year's activities. Your work and support are very much appreciated. I look forward to working with you all and seeing the SIGs flourish further throughout 2024.

You can participate in a SIG by filling in the registration form at:

<http://www.atlas-euro.org/groups.aspx>

## Cultural Tourism Research Group

*Greg Richards*  
*Breda University of Applied Sciences,*  
*The Netherlands*  
[richards.g@buas.nl](mailto:richards.g@buas.nl)

Over 150 researchers have been involved in the Cultural Tourism Research Project over the last 30 years. The new mailing list created by ATLAS shows that there are currently 100 members from 36 countries.

Country	No. of members
Spain	17
United Kingdom	13
Netherlands	11
Portugal	6
Finland	4
South Africa	4
Turkey	4
Ireland	3
Slovenia	3
Austria	2
Belgium	2
China	2
Germany	2
Hungary	2
Italy	2
Romania	2

Russia	2
Thailand	2
Argentina	1
Albania	1
Cyprus	1
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	1
France	1
Greece	1
Iran	1
Latvia	1
Nigeria	1
Poland	1
Serbia	1
Sri Lanka	1
Sweden	1
USA	1
Vietnam	1

In March 2023 the Cultural Tourism Group participated in the [Cultsense](#) webinar on [Researching cultural awareness in tourism](#), which included a presentation on Researching cultural awareness, based partly on the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Project. This presentation highlighted the value of carrying out longitudinal and cross-country research to identify differences and similarities in the experience of culture.

In June 2023 a SIG meeting was organised in conjunction with the Cultsense project final conference in Rotterdam, on the theme of [Bridging Cultures Through Travel](#). This conference

attracted a number of pioneering ATLAS Cultural Tourism Researchers, including Wil Munsters, Melanie Smith and Jim Butcher. Wil Munsters gave a keynote address on “Tourism as a Binding Agent between Cultures: Intercultural Pitfalls and Educational Challenges”, which reviewed many of the challenges of developing tourism across different cultures. Wil was also pleased to be able to announce the forthcoming French version of his book [Cultural Tourism in Ten Models](#), which will be published soon by L’Harmattan in a series edited by Jean-Michel Tobelem as *Théories et pratiques du tourisme culturel. Une étude de modèles et de leurs applications*.

The conference attracted 90 delegates who presented a total of 45 papers, many related to cultural tourism. Claire Wallace from the University of Aberdeen presented the research she has been doing for the EU SPOT project using the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Questionnaire. Surveys of visitors to the [Great Tapestry of Scotland](#) showed that most people coming to see this vast piece of textile art were older women, who were interested in seeing this collectively produced artwork.

Other surveys during the Covid pandemic were undertaken in Portugal, where Carlos Fernandes coordinated a national cultural tourism survey. This showed considerable variations in visitation levels, satisfaction and perceptions of authenticity, which could be linked to the levels of infections at the time. This research has now been published as: Richards, G. & Fernandes, C. (2022) Cultural tourism during the Pandemic: Lessons from Portugal. *Tourism, Culture and Communication*. [10.3727/109830422X16600594683427](#)

## Gastronomy and Tourism Research Group

*Silvia Aulet*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[silvia.aulet@udg.edu](mailto:silvia.aulet@udg.edu)

*Carlos Fernandes*  
*Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo*  
*Portugal*  
[cfernandes@estg.ipv.pt](mailto:cfernandes@estg.ipv.pt)

No report available.

## **Business Tourism Research Group**

*Rob Davidson*  
*University of Greenwich and MICE Knowledge*  
*United Kingdom*  
[rob@miceknowledge.com](mailto:rob@miceknowledge.com)

ATLAS SIG Business Tourism Conference  
Business Tourism and The New Normal  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands  
November 15-17, 2023

A message from Rob Davidson, Visiting Fellow at the University of Greenwich and Managing Director of MICE Knowledge ([www.miceknowledge.com](http://www.miceknowledge.com)).

On behalf of the ATLAS Business Tourism Special Interest Group, it is my great pleasure to invite you to the 2023 ATLAS Business Tourism conference from 15 to 17 November 2023 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where our hosts will be MBO College Centrum, located in the historic heart of the city.

The ATLAS Business Tourism conference is an annual event, operating under the auspices of ATLAS, The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research ([www.atlas-euro.org](http://www.atlas-euro.org)). Since 2004, it has become the most important international annual forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of best practice in teaching and researching this subject. The theme of this year's conference will be:

### **Business Tourism and The New Normal**

## **Events Research Group**

*Greg Richards*  
*Breda University of Applied Sciences*  
*The Netherlands*  
[richards.g@buas.nl](mailto:richards.g@buas.nl)

The ATLAS Events Group has been running since 2011, and has been publishing and developing research projects regularly ever since.

We had a very successful special track at the ATLAS Annual Conference in Cork, with 10 papers being presented. These included innovative contributions on subjects such as events for the dementia community during Covid-19, nudging of sustainable behaviour at festivals and digitalisation in rural festivals. A lively meeting of the group also agreed to continue with future activities related to publication and meetings within and beyond the ATLAS Annual Conference. One of these is a special issue of the *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* on Sharing And Belonging In Festival And Event Space. This special issue, edited by Bernadette Quinn (TU Dublin) and Maarit Kinnunen (University of Lapland) will include both conceptual and empirical papers from the Events Group.

Just after the Cork Conference, a special issue of the Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events on Festival Cities and Tourism was published, edited by Maria del Pilar

Leal Londoño from CETT in Barcelona and Greg Richards of Breda University. Most of these papers are available open access. An introduction to the special issues and a review of the papers can be found on the journal home page:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19407963.2022.2087664>

A special track on events for the 2023 ATLAS Annual Conference has been developed by Alba Colombo and Amber Herrewijn, with the theme: (De)Constructing events in light of underlying tensions, crises and disputes. You can find more details on the ATLAS website.

The ATLAS Event Management Languages Project published the findings of its research into the use of different languages in research papers in event management globally.

Greg Richards, Dianine Censon, Daniela Gračan, Mossa Haressy, Alžbeta Kiráľová, Elena Marulc, Giulia Rosetti, Marina Barkidžija Sotošek & Davide Sterchele (2022). Event management literature: Exploring the missing body of knowledge. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*. DOI: [10.1080/19407963.2022.2128810](https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2022.2128810).

This is an open access paper, free to download.

The main findings of the paper show that there is a considerable number of event management publications in Arabic, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Slovenian and Spanish, which effectively represent a 'missing body of knowledge' for scholars working in English. Only about 10% of these non-English sources are covered by the Scopus database. This research underlines the importance of work by ATLAS to promote the use of non-English languages in conferences and publications, making these more accessible to non-native speakers. A number of recommendations are contained in the paper in terms of further measures to promote more linguistic diversity in research.

The ATLAS Event Group research on event experiences also continues, with another round of the Carnival research being undertaken in 2023, with participation from the Universidade de São Paulo, the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE) and the Universidade Federal de Viçosa in Brazil, the Instituto Politécnico do Porto and the Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo in Portugal and the ERASMUS University and Breda University in the Netherlands. A brief introduction to the research was contained in an article published by Lénia Marques and Greg Richards on the social impact of Covid on Carnival

<https://pure.eur.nl/en/publications/what-happens-to-communities-when-carnival-disappears-carnival-as->

The Event Experiences Scale developed by the group continues to be applied in different contexts. A PhD student from Australia has been applying the EES scale to business events in Bangladesh, and students at BUAS have been doing secondary analysis on EES data from Chinese music festivals. An extension of the EES to digital events has also been developed by Greg Richards, Angela Dimitrova and Ilja Simons as part of a World Leisure Organisation research project. The report of this study can be found here:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362791311\\_Measuring\\_Physical\\_Digital\\_and\\_Hybrid\\_Leisure\\_Experiences\\_at\\_Events](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362791311_Measuring_Physical_Digital_and_Hybrid_Leisure_Experiences_at_Events)

In common with all the other ATLAS SIG groups, the Events Group has a new mailing list hosted on JISCMail. We started the new system with 87 members in 25 countries. The universities with the most list members are BUAS (6), Leeds Beckett (3) and Napier (3).

*Members of the ATLAS Events Group by country*

Country	No. of members
UK	24
Netherlands	14
Spain	5
Ireland	4
Italy	4
USA	4
Finland	3
Greece	3
Portugal	3
Sweden	3
Australia	2
China	2

Hungary	2
New Zealand	2
Belgium	1
Bulgaria	1
Denmark	1
Iceland	1
Poland	1
Romania	1
Russia	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Slovakia	1
South Africa	1
Sri Lanka	1

## Volunteer Tourism Research Group

*Elisa Burrai and Davide Sterchele*  
 Leeds Beckett University  
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[E.Burrai@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:E.Burrai@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)  
[D.Sterchele@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:D.Sterchele@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

### Activities in 2023

This year we are organising a special track titled *Global changes and new challenges for volunteer tourism practice and research* for the ATLAS Annual conference 2023. This Special Track is included in the ATLAS program, but it will be run virtually (onsite delegates can attend the Special Track in one of the workshop rooms where the workshop will take place hybrid). We have received a very good range of abstracts from a variety of contexts and we very much look forward to engaging in new debates on the current state of volunteer tourism!

This year we have also been busy coordinating the special issue for the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management on *Disruption and resilience in post-pandemic volunteer tourism: rethinking theory, contents and methods*. The SI is edited by the SIG coordinators (Dr Elisa Burrai and Dr Davide Sterchele) together with Professor Kirsten Holmes. This work is now coming to an end and we hope to organise follow up activities to showcase the breath and scope of the interesting work we have received.

On a final note, we have been working on a curated collection for Tourism Geographies which we hope we will have the opportunity to share and discuss further with the members of our SIG – particularly in relation to future research avenues.

### **Plans for next year**

Our plans for next year include the organisation of a special track for the next ATLAS annual conference (2024).

Additionally, we plan to showcase – perhaps via the organisation of webinars – the work submitted to our Special Issue on Volunteer Tourism.

As usual we would like to create opportunities (e.g. roundtable; informal meeting) to engage with the members of our SIG beyond the context of the ATLAS annual conference. This would provide a useful platform to exchange ideas on the future path of the SIG and to discuss the potential of collaborative initiatives.

### **Heritage Tourism and Education Research Group**

*Chin-Ee Ong*  
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*China*  
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*Imon Sharif Shams*  
*Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM)*  
*China*  
[imon@ift.edu.mo](mailto:imon@ift.edu.mo)

### **What were the activities last year?**

We have scheduled a special panel on Heritage, Health and Tourism at the ATLAS Annual Conference 2023 at Bad Gleichenberg, Austria, 10 - 13 October, 2023. Depending on the quality and the intentions of participants, we might proceed to secure a special issue at a peer-reviewed journal in heritage and/or tourism.

### **What are the plans for the next year(s)?**

In the next year, we seek to organise seminars within conferences or independent hybrid seminars built around focused themes for the benefit of publishing Special Issues.

## Space, Place, Mobilities in Tourism Research Group

*Paolo Russo*  
*University Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[antonio.russo@urv.cat](mailto:antonio.russo@urv.cat)

*Chiara Rabbiosi*  
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The activities of this SIG over the last year have been the following:

- Special Track at the annual ATLAS event in Cork, as Special Track 1 “Analysing and rethinking the infrastructure of tourism mobilities”, co-organised by A.P. Russo, C. Rabbiosi and F. Cavallo. The ST has hosted 12 presentations over 4 sessions, among which some distinguished authors in the field of tourism and mobilities studies.
- Continuation of the editorial work for a Special Issue in *Tourism Geographies* collecting a selection of papers presented at the 3rd SIG seminar held in May 2021 (“Social mobility goes on holiday: tourist im|mobilities, conflicts and empowerment”). The editorial work is almost finalised with 4-5 papers eventually accepted for publication accompanied by an editorial of the SI editors (the SIG coordinators).
- Launch of a new publication project, drawn from the contributions submitted and/or presented at our Special Track at the 2022 Cork congress. We have collected 10 long abstracts and currently we are in negotiations with the *Applied Mobilities* journal for acceptance of a Special Issue.

Organization-wise, we have restructured the coordination of the SIG, now a shared responsibility of A.P. Russo and C. Rabbiosi, assisted for technical and communication issues by W. den Hoedt and I. Paulino. This team has reorganised the group affiliation through a GoogleGroups adherence campaign, and the social media channels of the SIG. Currently this GoogleGroups counts with 40 members.

There are no plans to be present with a special track at the annual 2023 event in Bad Gleichenberg and unfortunately the coordinators will not attend that event, but we definitely will present a Special Track proposal for the 2024 event in Breda. We have scheduled an organisational meeting of the SIG affiliated members in October 2023, and in that occasion we will discuss new initiatives and events. In particular we would like to foster the mobility of young researchers and PhD candidates between the centres covered by the SIG network to work on specific projects or give or take part in research seminars.

## Urban Tourism Research Group

Melanie Kay Smith  
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Hungary  
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Ko Koens  
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Breda University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands  
University of Johannesburg, South Africa  
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The activities of the SIG in 2022/2023 included following up on many of the themes that emerged from the meeting in Helsingborg, Sweden in June 2022. These included:

- Tourism and quality of life in cities
- Sustainable and green cities
- Post-overtourism and post-COVID urban tourism strategies
- Re-positioning and re-branding of cities
- Smart city developments

A questionnaire has been designed which focuses on the role of urban green spaces in cities and their connection to both resident and tourist wellbeing. It will be piloted in Budapest in summer/autumn 2023 and then offered to SIG members for wider distribution.

A questionnaire is also being developed that explores resident quality of life in smart cities. This questionnaire will hopefully be distributed in several cities throughout Europe and may form the basis of a project bid in future as well as several publications.

An interactive Urban Tourism SIG stream was organized at the annual ATLAS conference in Cork by Ko Koens and Donagh Horan, which was rather innovative as it included elements of 'living lab' placemaking work that has been ongoing with students in the Netherlands. This approach enables participants to work alongside practitioners, stakeholders and residents in recommending creative solutions for city development.

Several publications have emerged which focus on the main themes listed above, including the following examples:

Chang, S. and Smith, M. K. (2023) Residents' Quality of Life in Smart Cities, *Land*, 12 (4), <https://doi.org/10.3390/land12040876>

Mzembe, A. M., Koens, K. and Calvi, L. (2023) The institutional antecedents of sustainable development in cultural heritage tourism, *Sustainable Development*, 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2565>

Smith, M. K., Pinke-Sziva, I. and Berezvai, Z. (2023) The relative importance of culture in urban tourism: implications for segmentation. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, 18(2), 157-173, <https://doi.org/10.1108/CBTH-01-2022-0026>

[Smith, M. K., Pinke-Sziva, I. and Puczko, L. \(2023\) Urban Green Spaces and Resident Wellbeing: Foundations of Sustainable City Tourism, in Maxim, C. et al. \(eds\) Handbook of Sustainable Urban Tourism, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.](#)

Publications are also currently being written that focus on city branding and re-positioning in a post-overtourism, post-COVID era.

## Visual Tourism Research Group

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No report available.

## Climate Change and Tourism Research Group

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During the last year (September 2022/June 23) we have organised the special track in 2022 Annual conference in Cork, Ireland, with the theme "Tourism in the new normal: accelerating climate change or embodying crisis?". Track governors: Ioanna Farsari, Dalarna University, Sweden; Harald A. Friedl, FH JOANNEUM, Austria; [harald.friedl@fh-joanneum.at](mailto:harald.friedl@fh-joanneum.at); Jane Turner, Leeds Beckett University [leedsbeckett.ac.uk](http://leedsbeckett.ac.uk). The special track was completed with five presentations.

During that conference we had also our annual meeting, which was hybrid. During the meeting we discussed:

- Some of the theme areas participants were interested in were around Education (i.e. what skills can we give the students regarding CC and tourism?); transportation, responsible tourism, impacts of CC on tourism demand, PhD students
- We discussed also that since CC and tourism is a very broad area, would worth setting some focus for the coming 2-3 years which are realistic. Of interest is also to communicate in an effective way (e.g. infographic was proposed) the areas of focus within the SIG and increase the visibility of the SIG.
- Have interim online meetings to keep the group together
- We discussed also publication opportunities. The ATLAS Review would be a good starting point also for visibility of the group. However, there is the issue of accessibility there only to ATLAS members otherwise with a fee.
- We discussed publishing opportunities beyond the traditional journals. CABI database with tourism case studies - <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/journal/tcs> was mentioned. Also The Conversation which is an online platform where academics share short articles on their research or point of view - <https://theconversation.com/europe/search?q=tourism>

During this year we have put more effort on keeping us together and following up on our discussions with interim online meetings. SO far we had two of them: On February 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 we had one online interim meeting. During that meeting we discussed the following:

- Organise a special track on ATLAS 2023 annual conference.  
So we have planned for for a special track to take place in 2023 annual conference with the theme “Quality of life, wellbeing, climate change: Bridging the theory-action gap”. Track governors are Ioanna Farsari, Dalarna University Sweden; Harald A. Friedl, FH JOANNEUM, Austria.
- Explore initiatives from the group.  
A lot of our discussions developed around mobility (slow tourism, mobility justice, policies influencing mobilities) and also academic flying. In that context Chloe prepared a suggestion on how we can explore/discuss together academic flying. The suggestion was communicated via email and was discussed in the next meeting (see further below)
- Collaborate with other SIG

On June 20<sup>th</sup> we had another interim online meeting where we presented more information around 2023 ATLAS annual conference and our special track. We also discussed the idea of academic flying and how to proceed with it. A number of colleagues have expressed their interest to participate and we decided to have a first input by September 1<sup>st</sup> with the goal to have some preliminary data for ATLAS annual conference.

The next meeting will be during ATLAS annual conference in Austria.

Work plan 2022 / 2023:

- Continue the discussion around a publication, possibly invite pieces of opinion to be published in Atlas Review
- Organise Special track 2024
- Continue with the academic flying initiative
- Explore ways to collaborate with other SIG (e.g. Mobility, Education, Circular economy)

## Tourism Education Research Group

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The ATLAS special track on tourism education at the Cork 2022 conference was a great success with a wide range of presentations and discussion on good practice in tourism education. The focus of presentations centred on education that supported a greater level of practical and theoretical knowledge for students to implement sustainability principles following

graduation from tourism degree programmes. Excellent examples of how to engage students with practical destination-based scenarios and challenges and holistic methods of teaching were explored.

The next ATLAS conference in Austria 2023 will continue to disseminate and share good practice examples in teaching particularly following the Covid crisis and the need for greater levels of teaching innovation and engagement with students and industry in the classroom. Other key themes will continue to address the need for greater levels of sustainability education and content, suggestions and recommendations based on planning teaching programmes and delivery of case study scenarios and problem-solving, whilst working with destinations and businesses to develop students' applied theoretical knowledge.

Following the conference in Cork and the well-attended SIG meeting at the conference there have been two further SIG Tourism Education meetings in the last year including an online webinar held in July 2023. At the recent ATLAS online webinar, guest speakers Dr Lisa Gorton, Leeds Beckett University and Dr. Carla De Melo from the Porto Polytechnic in Portugal presented excellent thought-provoking presentations on new ways of developing and updating tourism programmes. By using extensive student consultation and feedback and more industry partnerships and more interdisciplinary practices both institutions demonstrated innovative and progressive ways of teaching.

Following the next annual ATLAS conference in Austria, it is hoped that more templates of case study examples will follow to share on the ATLAS website.

From January 2023, Dr. Sheena Carlisle started on a new role on the ATLAS Board to support the development of the ATLAS AQUALT Certification in collaboration with the ATLAS Board and the SIG Tourism Education. AQUALT aims to support quality development of new and existing tourism programmes for ATLAS member organisations.

## **Circular Economy and circularity in the Space of Tourism and Hospitality**

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Being founded at the end of 2022, this group in its first year focused on discussing and clarifying its lines of activity and research as well as on mapping the current knowledge, theorisations, and applications of Circular Economy in the tourism and hospitality sector. This meant that, after the formal approval in the autumn of 2022, there have been a set of internal meetings among the SIG's coordinators and core group of supporters to draw on their own first-hand experiences and research lines and explore the intersections with elements of Circular Economy. Such preliminary phase allowed setting a roadmap for the 2023 and several milestones.

## Activities in 2023

The activities consisted in:

- (i) an online launch webinar on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ka-uxmcRqlo>),
- (ii) a Special Track dedicated to this SIG within the ATLAS Annual Conference 2023
- (iii) an open online meeting among the SIG members on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2023.

### (i) SIG Launch Webinar

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023 (15:30 CET)

*Speakers in a round table:*

Prof. **Ioanna Farsari** - Dalarna University  
Prof. **Matthias Fuchs** - Mid-Sweden University  
Prof. **Flemming Sørensen** - Roskilde University  
Prof. **Rodolfo Baggio** - Bocconi University

*Moderators:*

Dr. Lucia Tomassini and Prof. Elena Cavagnaro - NHL Stenden University



### (ii) Special Track in the ATLAS Annual Conference 2023

10-13 October 2023

Bad Gleichenberg, Austria

*We very much look forward to our Special Track and its contributors at the ATLAS Annual Conference 2023.*

### (iii) Online meeting among ATLAS SIG members

23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2023 (15:00 CET)

With a core group of participants and novel SIG members, the SIG's coordinators and supporters discussed drivers, opportunities, constraints, and expectations about this SIG and its outreach and possible outcomes. It has been agreed on using the online moments and future webinars to host practitioners and project managers to hear their first-hand experiences, activities, and initiatives about Circular Economy to bridge theory to practice. Moreover, it has been decided to collectively work on a viewpoint paper as a baseline research letter / 'white paper' on the theme of Circular Economy in Tourism and Hospitality to be.

## Plans for the next year

For the next year we aim at including a Special Track within the ATLAS annual Conference 2024 in Breda, NL.

As discussed in the first online meetings with the SIG' members we would like i) to organise at least two webinars in 2024 focusing on the experience of practitioners, entrepreneurs, and project managers in the form of "Conversations" or "Round Tables"; ii) to collaborate in the writing of a viewpoint paper as a baseline research letter / 'white paper' on Circular Economy and Circularity in the space of tourism and hospitality to be published as a first academic output of this SIG.

We would also like to hold an informal and open online meeting with the members of the SIG to exchange ideas on the future path of the SIG and collaborative initiatives.

## Artificial Intelligence and Tourism

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### Context

Artificial intelligence (AI) has permeated numerous sectors, including the tourism industry. AI-powered technologies such as big data, blockchain, and AI language models like ChatGPT are increasingly integrated into the tourism landscape. These technologies have the potential to transform tourism-related operations and experiences by offering personalised services, increasing efficiency, and providing insightful data for decision-making. Big data offer insights into tourist behaviour, enabling tourism providers to anticipate trends and tailor their services accordingly. AI algorithms can analyse this data to produce personalised recommendations and targeted marketing, enhancing customer satisfaction and augmenting revenue. More recently, AI language models (e.g., ChatGPT) have revolutionised customer service and interaction in the tourism sector, providing 24/7 customer service, personalised recommendations, and multi-language interaction, enhancing the customer experience and reducing operational costs.

However, the increased reliance on AI and related technologies also presents significant challenges. These include the potential loss of jobs to automation, threats to privacy and data security, and the risk of AI exacerbating inequality by benefiting tech-savvy tourists and providers to the detriment of those less able to adopt or access these technologies. There are also ethical considerations surrounding AI's decision-making processes and the potential lack of transparency, often referred to as the "black box" problem. Furthermore, AI's advent challenges traditional pedagogical approaches in tourism education. It necessitates the inclusion of technical and ethical aspects of AI (e.g., AI language models such as ChatGPT) in the curriculum, requiring a multidisciplinary perspective. The proposed SIG can act as a platform for educators to share experiences, strategies, and challenges in incorporating AI into their teaching practices, facilitating a collective advancement of pedagogy.

Despite the tourism industry and education grappling with the implementation of AI and its ramifications, there is a noticeable absence of comprehensive, interdisciplinary academic exploration into these technologies' full potential, ethical implications, and transformative

power in the tourism industry and education. Hence, there is an urgent need to establish a SIG on 'Artificial Intelligence and Tourism'. This SIG would facilitate systematic exploration and academic discourse around these technologies, fostering collaborative research, knowledge exchange, and thought leadership in this critical area. In doing so, it would make a significant contribution to academic literature while providing valuable insights to the tourism industry, policymakers, and educators alike.

The SIG welcomes a variety of topics from tourist, brand, societal, and technological, and educational perspectives (but not limited to):

- Emerging AI technologies and their potential in reshaping tourism
- The impact of AI on tourist decision-making
- The role of AI in enhancing personalised tourist experiences
- Tourist attitudes and trust towards AI applications in tourism
- AI and brand differentiation in the tourism industry
- The use of AI in customer relationship management in tourism
- Job displacement in the tourism industry: The AI challenge
- AI, tourism, and sustainable development goals: A critical analysis
- The impact of AI-driven tourism on local communities
- Mental health issues associated with the use of AI
- AI-driven prediction and decision-making in tourism
- Challenges and solutions in integrating AI in tourism operations
- Ethical considerations in using AI for tourism education
- Data privacy and the ethical use of AI

### **Aims and objectives**

The principal aim of this SIG is to establish a dynamic platform for the comprehensive study and exploration of AI within the context of the tourism industry and education. The specific objectives include:

- Facilitating knowledge exchange and collaborative research on AI and tourism among scholars, industry professionals, other SIGs (e.g., tourism education and business tourism) and technology developers in the field.
- Critically analysing the potential, application, and implications of AI in the tourism industry and education.
- Nurturing new researchers (including PhD students), facilitating collaborations, and contributing to the development of curricula that address the intersection of AI and tourism.
- Advising on ethical considerations and responsible use of AI in the tourism industry and education.
- Leading to academic output through organising seminars, webinars, conferences, and coordinating special issues in academic journals or edited volumes.
- Supporting researchers in forming consortia for international funding applications.

### **Annual work plan**

The provision work plan for 2023 consists of:

- Quarters 2 and 3, 2023: Launch of the novel Special Interest Group and enrolment of new members.
- Quarter 4, 2023: (1) Organisation of a Special Track at the ATLAS Europe conference, or collaboration with another ATLAS SIG event, to stimulate cooperation,

- (2) Organisation of a PhD session (e.g., open discussion on AI in education from the perspective of young researchers) as part of the ATLAS conference.
- Quarter 4, 2023 – Quarter 1, 2024: Regular online workshops and webinars on a variety of topics related to AI in tourism.

## ATLAS Regional Groups

### ATLAS Africa

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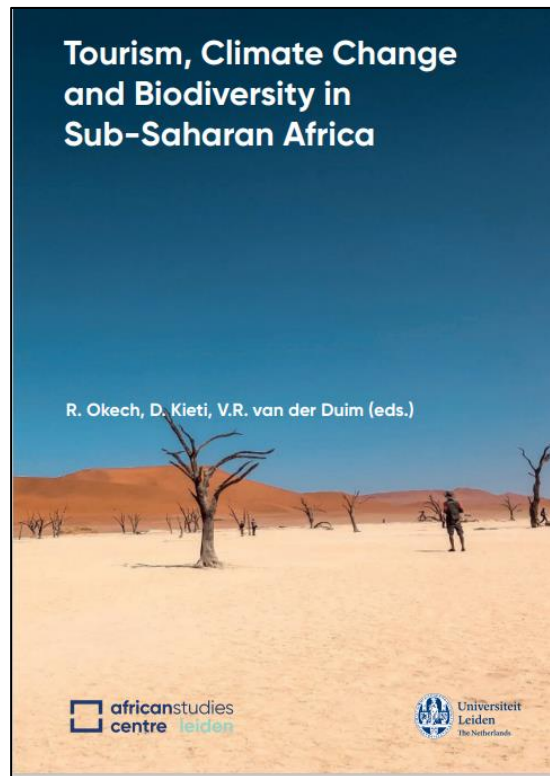
The Africa Chapter of ATLAS in 2023 continues to be led by Professor Karen Harris and Mr C.R. Botha. Similar to the successes of 2022, 2023 was an eventful year for this regional Chapter. The latter culminating around three key events.

Firstly, ATLAS Africa had a meeting, at the CultSense & ATLAS SIG Cultural Tourism Conference in Rotterdam, Netherlands, with the University of Zululand, South Africa to discuss the hosting of an in-person conference on the continent in 2024 or 2025 in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This meeting was a productive discussion, where the emphasis on collaboration, cooperation and the need for the sustainable and responsible promotion of tourism, hospitality and leisure research in Africa were established to be key drivers behind the organizing of the future event. In this meeting ATLAS was represented by Vice Chairperson of ATLAS, Dr Corné Dijkmans from Breda University of Applied Science, Ms. Leontine Onderwater of ATLAS, Professor Karen Harris Board member for ATLAS Africa from the University of Pretoria, and Professor Thandi Nzama and Dr. Samukelisiwe Mildred Nkwanyana from the University of Zululand. The aforementioned event was held at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication.



*Picture (left to right): Professor T. Nzama (University of Zululand); Mx. Leontine Onderwater (ATLAS); Dr. M. Smith (Conference Keynote Speaker); Professor K. Harris (ATLAS Africa; University of Pretoria) and Dr. S.M. Nkwanyana (University of Zululand)*

Secondly, a hybrid book launch was held to commemorate and honor the extensive work and influence of the late Professor B. Wishitemi and his involvement in sustainable tourism development in Africa, as well as his affiliation to ATLAS Africa during the Chapter's founding years. The book entitled, "Tourism, climate change and biodiversity in Sub-Saharan Africa" edited by R.Okech, D. Kieti and R. Van Der Duim, was produced and showcased at this event as part of his legacy work on the continent. This insightful and thought-provoking piece of literature was in turn published by the Centre for African Studies in Leiden in the Netherlands, with the event in part being organized by ATLAS and the MOI University located in Kessis, Kenya. The aforesaid publication is an open access source and can be downloaded at the below link.



*Picture: In honor of Professor B. Wishitemi – Tourism, climate change and biodiversity in sub-Saharan Africa.*

Link: <https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/handle/1887/3514070>

Lastly, the 2023 graduate student cohort in the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Honours degree in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria will once again present an annual student-led webinar, in collaboration with ATLAS and ATLAS Africa, to showcase their successes and growth within this postgraduate program's tourism business and entrepreneurship incubator (UP Campus Tours). In keeping with the 2023 ATLAS CultSense theme, this year's cohort will present on the topic of "Tourism and Cultural Diversity: the UPCT way", with the event to be livestreamed on YouTube in late October 2023. This year's student cohort is made of the following five postgraduate students: Ms. Monique Olivier, Ms Elmien Viktor, Ms Anelisiwe Dinizulu, Ms Marli Rheeder and Ms Kaylin Kemsley. More information is to follow on this virtual event in due course on all ATLAS platforms.



Picture (top down): Ms Monique Olivier; Ms Anelisiwe Dinizulu; Ms Marli Rheeder; Ms Elmien Viktor; and Ms Kaylin Kemsley.

ATLAS Africa continues to work to grow its network in 2024, and is similarly looking to further expanding its teaching, learning and research frameworks in tourism, hospitality and leisure with other African universities across the continent in the short and long-term.

## ATLAS Europe

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### Report 2023

- ATLAS promotion at the conference Italia e Cultura, Palermo, Sicily, June 2023
- Preparation for research among employers in the tourism industry - unfortunately, it has not occurred.
- Multiculturalism in tourism - student event - unfortunately, it has not taken place.

### Plan 2024

ATLAS promotion at different events

Online seminar: AI in tourism - AI Unleashed: Shaping the Future of Travel and Tourism

Or

Online seminar: Destination AI: A Journey into the Future of Tourism

## ATLAS Latin America

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In 2023, ATLAS Latin America centered its efforts on extending the network in the region. We are glad to welcome four new members: Unesco Chair in Creative Economy & Public Policies - CEPP Network (Brazil), Universidad Surcolombiana USCO (Colombia), Universidad Anáhuac Cancún (Mexico), and Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero (Mexico).

We have started organizing the next ATLAS Latin America Conference in Autumn 2024. It will be held in Taxco (Guerrero, Mexico) by the Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero. Our objective for this event is to attract more presenters, from a wider variety of countries from the region and beyond and to increase the number of in-person attendees.

## ATLAS Asia

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### **What were the activities last year?**

ATLAS Asia supported Community-Based Tourism Symposium 2022 at Sabah Malaysia organised by Borneo Tourism Research Centre at University of Sabah Malaysia.

Consequently, the organiser of the conference nominated and sponsored University College Sabah Foundation as a new ATLAS member.

### **What are the plans for the next year(s)?**

In the next year, we seek to organise one or two seminars within conferences or independent hybrid seminars built around focused themes for the benefit of publishing Special Issues.

We might also run a series of webinars for early career researchers in Asia supported by *Tourist Studies* journal and the Atlas Critical Tourism Studies-Asia Pacific Group.

We are also planning to have an ATLAS Asia Conference in Sabah, Malaysia in 2024.

## ATLAS Oceania

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### **Two planned activities for the near future for ATLAS Oceania**

In a significant development for the global leisure and tourism community, December 2023 will witness the convergence of two major leisure-related congresses in New Zealand. The 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial Australia and New Zealand Association for Leisure studies (ANZALS) will be held from December 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> at Auckland University of Technology. Following that, from December 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, the World Leisure Congress will take place at the University of Otago in Dunedin. ATLAS has long standing relationships with both ANZALS and World Leisure and ATLAS member attending these conferences will have the opportunity to connect during informal get-togethers at both events.

ATLAS and Critical Tourism Studies Asia Pacific (CTSAP) are planning to work together to harnessing the strengths of both organisations to elevate tourism and leisure education and research in the Asia Pacific to a broader global platform. Now that Prof Joseph Cheer and myself are in the same department at Western Sydney University, I am very excited about the future of ATLAS in the region. One of the highlights of this collaboration is the planning of the inaugural ATLAS Critical Tourism Studies Asia Pacific in-between conference. While in the early planning stages, this event is already generating anticipation within the academic community within the region. The conference is expected to be hosted at Western Sydney University. Stay tuned for more information about the ATLAS CTSAP conference, including a call for papers, which will be distributed in the coming weeks. The conference promise to be a significant milestone in the journey toward advancing tourism and leisure education and research in the Asia Pacific region.

## ATLAS Middle East

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The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) Middle East:

1. Will organize a webinar on “The Afterlife of Mega Events. Measuring Impacts and Outcomes in the Middle East” (March 2024). The webinar will provide an opportunity to gain insights into the afterlife of mega events that are being held in the Middle East, such as EXPO 2020 and FIFA World Cup 2022. Presentations from researchers in the region will focus on these back-to-back mega-international events that make the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) emerge stronger on the global tourism map and plan a positive legacy from the mega-event projects.
2. Submitted proposal for assistance in funding to Zayed University for a ME regional conference in the Fall 2024 or Spring 2025.
3. Is in the process of collecting all Middle East universities that have tourism departments to invite them to be engaged with ATLAS.