

## INNOVATION PROCESS IN TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Innovation is one main driver of growth and success of tourism destinations all over the world. As so far only little empirical research has been carried out at the destination level regarding innovation strategies and innovation processes in, and behavior of actors in tourism destinations, this project aims to deliver some more empirical results which factors determine the innovation process in tourism destinations. For tourism destination organizations it seems of utmost importance to get more knowledge about the drivers and barriers of innovation in tourism destinations.

The main goals of the project are to advance the existing body of knowledge and theoretical foundation in the area of innovation strategies of tourism destination organizations (DMOs) and to gain new insights in the innovation behavior of rural tourism destinations. The Institute for Strategic Management, Marketing and Tourism, with its partners in Vietnam, will attempt to investigate several of the key issues related to the innovation behavior of tourism destinations as a key prerequisite for the destination competitiveness for many of the mature destinations, taking as a case study one region in each country (Tyrol in Austria and South Vietnam in Vietnam).

Against this background the proposed project will attempt to answer the following key research question: Which factors drive and which factors hinder innovation and the development of new products in tourism destinations? In addition, some more research question arise, e.g.:

1. What opportunities are there for destinations wishing to innovate themselves in order to remain competitive?
2. How innovative are Tyrol and South Vietnam? Which variables are helpful for measuring innovation in tourism destinations?
3. What is the relationship between destination innovation strategy, innovation behavior and destination success?
4. What are the main differences regarding tourism destinations between the alpine tourism product in Tyrol and the seaside tourism product in South Vietnam?
5. Which innovation strategies seem to be useful to develop new products and overcome stagnation phases in mature markets? Which innovation strategies can be useful in the case of Tyrol and South Vietnam? Which new tourism products are appropriate for these two destinations?
6. Which entrepreneurial qualifications are necessary to develop new products in destinations? The Austrian partner do have a lot of experience in research in innovation and the development of tourism destinations. In comparing these different destinations and in exchanging knowledge about barriers and push factors of innovation processes the destination managers can learn how to influence innovation and product development processes amongst the destination stakeholders. Finally, the main goal is to develop innovation process guidelines for these destinations.

The following steps are planned within the next 2 years so far (year 1 a bilateral and year 2 a multinational project):

Step 1: Workshop (Spring 2019) in Vietnam to discuss and develop the project idea: Project will start with a workshop for information and ideas raising to potential partners, especially some more destinations to become involved in the project.

Step 2: Case Study in both countries (2019-2020): to compare the situation of tourism destinations and their actors' innovation behavior and innovation processes.

Step 3: Workshop with presentation of the results of the case studies and further development of the project (Summer 2020).

Step 4: Project Report and Publication of the results (Autumn of 2020).