

# **The Catalunya 2020 Vision for Responsible Tourism: The Barcelona Declaration**

## **1. Recognizing how far we have come**

- 1.1 The tradition of Catalonia as a tourist destination dates back to the early twentieth century. Subsequently, the growth of both mass supply and demand in some parts of the coast in the 60s, and the exceptional growth in Barcelona and Catalonia due to the 1992 Olympics, put Catalunya on the international tourism map.
- 1.2 The growth of tourism supply and demand was unbalanced due at times to a lack of planning in the medium and long-term. Despite the political, social, cultural and economic changes, Catalonia has been very successful in tourism development. Thanks to its attractions, safety and economic development in recent years, Catalonia has become a major tourist region of the world with more than 24.5 million tourist arrivals in 2012. Tourism today represents about 11% of Catalonia's GDP and it generates around 400,000 jobs.
- 1.3 Tourism has been used as a platform for projecting Barcelona and Catalunya to the world. The core of Catalonia's tourism policy has, until recently, been promotion. During the Forum of Cultures held in Barcelona in 2004, there was critical reflection on tourism in the city and sustainability. Even today, their thoughts and findings shape the current debate on tourism. Barcelona and Catalunya has enjoyed a dramatic increase in visitor numbers and revenues since 1992 and in recent years more emphasis has been placed by the city, province and country on the management of tourism to increase the positive impacts and decrease the negative ones.
- 1.4 This new phase has reinforced Catalunya's territorial identity. This differentiation allows the development of tourism at a territorial level, extending beyond the city limits and contributing to minimizing the negative impacts, by reducing concentration in specific locations and spreading the benefits across the territory, promoting sustainability and local community participation.
- 1.5 The number of visitors received continues to have importance for Catalunya, but there is now a recognition that less emphasis needs to be placed on increasing the number of arrivals and a greater emphasis put on the management of tourism; reducing seasonality and increasing the yield, along with a more equitable distribution of the impacts of tourism, both positive and negative,.
- 1.6 The diversity of the territory, and commitments of the public and private sector, create added value in the promotion of tourism that recognizes Catalunya's uniqueness and cultural heritage. The public and private sector work to ensure that tourism fits better with the needs of Catalunya in order to guarantee sustainability and community participation.
- 1.7 For these reasons therefore, the importance of tourism has led recently to the development of strategic management and marketing plans for the various tourist authorities of Catalonia, to better organise tourism, and especially to rethink the model of tourism that Catalunya wants and needs.

- 1.8 During recent years the Catalans have worked intensively to consolidate Catalunya and Barcelona as a strong destination, managed by people with a deep commitment and vitality, looking to improve the quality of public space, attractions and touristic services.
- 1.9 All this work has been recognized in several certificates which demonstrate Catalunya's commitment to sustainable tourism. A good example is the Biosphere World Class Destination Certification (2011) given to the city of Barcelona, that encompasses all the criteria from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, as well as the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in different natural parks in Catalunya.

## **2. The Catalan 2020 Vision is focused on Sustainable Growth and Community Participation:**

2.1 Tourism has played an important role in Catalan society and the experience which has been acquired during this mature phase of tourism development has led Catalunya to pursue new challenges in the future of tourism in Barcelona and Catalonia. The new vision

- is based on the definition of responsible tourism in the Cape Town Declaration (2002) and the Barcelona Charter on Responsible Tourism (2010)
- respects the development of Barcelona and Catalonia
- balances the relationship between residents and visitors
- prioritises the realisation of economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability

2.2 The next steps are to:

- secure consensus amongst stakeholders so that changes in governing political parties do not change the tourism development and management strategy - Catalunya recognises that there needs to be a consistent approach to destination management
- change the priority from marketing and promotion to governance
- exercise leadership in engaging residents and ensuring that their interests are respected
- distribute tourism more evenly in the region and the society
- ensuring the economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism in the region in the long term

2.3 The challenge for Catalunya:

The institutions intend to go deeper into all aspects of tourism, especially to address its future viability. This change of focus stems from reflections enabled by the 7th International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations and the identification of a number of principles:

- a) What is good for citizens is good for the tourist. Places that are good to live in are also good to visit. Efforts will be made to improve the quality of life for local people by managing the friction between residents and visitors and to improve the interaction between hosts and guests.

- b) Discover Catalunya needs to be based on local values to express the rich local reality, highlighting the most genuine and authentic experiences to be had in the territory with its people, avoiding stereotypes and the narrowing of the product.
- c) The tourist that Catalunya wants to attract is the one who will respect the environment, the society and the local culture, eager to discover and share experiences.
- d) The common goal of making tourism in Catalonia a tool to achieve the social, economic and environmental aspirations through responsible tourism requires coordination, communication and the co-ordinated work of the various administrations and sectors involved.

### **3. Conclusions from the 7th International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations**

This section of the Declaration presents the outcomes of the working groups. Recognizing that the following list of reflections and actions is not exhaustive but only an indicator of the path to follow in order to make tourism better and to make Responsible Tourism in Catalunya reality, these recommendations will be taken into account for inclusion in Catalunya's tourism strategy and the plans that it subsequently informs.

Five sets of conclusions are presented here reflecting the work done by conference participants in the working groups during RTD7. The conclusions represent the views of those who participated in the panels and working groups, and therefore cannot be understood as representing the views of the organising partners of the RTD7 Conference. The outcomes of the panels have not been edited and are presented here along with a few relevant conclusions that were formulated during the main plenary session of the conference.

#### ***3.1 Taking responsibility for the environmental impacts of tourism***

Although tourism is recognised as a very important economic activity as well as an excellent tool for knowledge and respect between different societies and cultures, we must also accept that tourism has generated and still generates negative impacts on our environment, e.g. contribution to climate change, air pollution, consumption of non-renewable resources (such as soil, water and energy) and degradation of ecosystems, etc.

**The control and management of these impacts is crucial not only for the preservation of the environment but even for the survival of tourism.** To move forward, the basic issues are the following:

1. **Planning for sustainability** in a holistic and integrated way: in originating countries, in the destination and during travel.
2. **Understand and respect differential carrying capacities** (e.g. urban versus natural areas) to assist implementation of visitor management plans and measures, including imposing limits to visitation where necessary.
3. **Participation and partnership** of all the stakeholders: manage the environment through a shared responsibility that involves businesses, public sector and tourists as well as local communities through citizen participation.
4. **Minimising impacts** by communicating environmental information to tourists.

5. The promotion of the tourist offer must incorporate and prioritize the “**marketing of sustainability**”, including local products, natural and cultural heritage preservation, cooperation and integration in the host societies, contribution to local wellbeing and economic development.
6. The **improvement of tourist destinations** must be equivalent to the **improvement of the living conditions** of the host cities and villages.
7. **Better match supply and demand**, including aspects of seasonality, to both minimise overcapacity and crowding.
8. **Encourage businesses to take a destination stewardship** approach that goes beyond business-related CSR activities, but involves the neighbourhood and local partnerships to maximise local benefits of tourism activity.
9. Maximise the use of **innovative technology** to reduce environmental impacts, focusing on energy and water efficiency and synergies between those two, and the management of waste and air pollution.

### ***3.2 The role of governments in the planning and management of destinations***

Recognize that the governance of destinations goes beyond government, and should therefore involve all relevant stakeholders working collaboratively, transparently and in the spirit of shared responsibility for creating better places to live in and to visit

**This requires that government administrations:**

1. **Provide leadership** in the planning of tourism in collaboration with stakeholders.
2. **Accurately identify all stakeholders**, including those outside of tourism, and actively involving all in planning and management for tourism so that diverse interests and objectives are understood and reconciled with plans to provide net benefits for the destination.
3. **Engage all relevant parts of local government**, for example transport, land-use planning, utility services, etc. that affect tourism in order to create mutual understanding and forge partnerships for delivery.
4. Bring together different stakeholders and **facilitating collaboration in product development and marketing, thereby giving local residents a say in how the destination is marketed.**
5. Act as **catalyst and facilitate investment** so as to work collaboratively with industry in the development of products that address gaps in demand with respect to the visitor’s experience and build on the authentic characteristics of the destination.
6. **Collaborate with training and education institutions** on research, industry placements and continued professional development, in order to increase knowledge about the impacts of tourism in destinations, find solutions for improved management of impacts, and enhance skills for critical analysis and innovation.
7. **Recognise and protect the rights of the various stakeholders** in tourism: citizens, tourists, business operators, tourism industry employees and investors.

8. Recognise that tourism is a service sector industry, characterized by seasonality, casual labour, part time employment and low barriers to entry, and as such **protect the rights of employees** in the tourism industry to fair working conditions of employment and a share in the benefits.
9. Recognise **tourists as temporary citizens** and protect their rights to be safe and not to be exploited.
10. **Assess the scale and impact of tourism** beyond conventional measures of visitor arrivals (quantity). Place increased focus on the quality of tourists and the spread of the economic benefits of tourism, and better understand the socio-cultural impacts on citizens. Engage residents to transparently communicate information about the impacts and the realities of tourism. Work with citizens to find ways of overcoming negative impacts such as congestion and overcrowding, and increase the benefits to the immediate locale, and spread benefits to other geographic areas.
11. **Understand the viewpoints and perspectives of tourists themselves.**
12. **Create systems and processes to gather the relevant information.**
13. **Clearly define the roles of different stakeholders in bringing about Responsible Tourism**, recognising that most tourism impacts are experienced at the local level and that local government as elected representatives of local residents are best placed to plan and manage tourism at that local level.
14. Through regulations regarding operating criteria, planning permissions, and financial and non-financial incentives, **attract new operators that will help make the destination a better place to live in and to visit.**
15. **Apply regulations and sanctions** regarding appropriate operating criteria together with technical guidance and support **to influence existing operators to help create better destinations to live in and to visit.**
16. **Create comprehensive strategic plans, maintain consistency in implementation, check back that the outcomes are in line with desired objectives, and revise actions to respond to new information and realities.**
17. **Commit to implementation over the long term with political will and adequate budgets.**
18. Ensure that **interventions are feasible and generate equitable socio-economic benefit**, especially for local stakeholders.
19. Ensure that the **sustainability aspirations of strategic plans are also reflected in marketing plans and marketing communications.**
20. Take into account the **balance of different economic activities**, placing tourism in perspective of the whole economy, and creating linkages between tourism and other economic activities through innovation and collaborative initiatives and agreements.
21. Leverage the potential of tourism to exploit opportunities beyond short term visitation such as **inward investment into other economic activities.**
22. **Destination Governance:** so as to ensure **that the authenticity of the destination** and the quality of the tourist experience is sustained, recognise the full value of cultural assets, make integrating them as part of the visitor experience an objective, and target those sources of visitor demand that appreciate the value of these assets.
23. Promote a **joint marketing strategy focused more on quality** and less on tourist arrivals.

24. **Ensure a cooperative approach in the planning, management and promotion of the destination** through various public institutions and private sector organisations. Implementing strategies that **prioritize more responsible and sustainable contracts**.
25. **A continuous dialogue is the responsibility of all actors.** It is necessary that all stakeholders, both public and private, take part in the common goal of making tourism more responsible, accepting the responsibility that corresponds to each person.
26. **Coordination and collective prosperity** to obtain social and collective benefit, preserving the general interest of appropriate target market segments and ensuring better living conditions for workers, employees and their families. This **new and more “permeable” model of tourism requires greater communication between authorities and citizens**.
27. **Commit to transparency** both in government and in the administration of taxes as well as in the management of the impacts of tourism activities in destinations.
28. **Encourage those companies that are socially responsible and are committed to the environment as well as their trade.**

### ***3.3 Sense of place: local communities, responsibility and the visitor experience.***

1. Destinations are where tourism takes place. **Sense of place is at the heart of responsible tourism**; it contributes to a resident’s identity, pride and association to a place whilst enhancing experiences for visitors. It is, however, a complex topic that means different things to different people.
2. People form an attachment to places and progressively transform them to make them their own. This may change the character of a place over time, transforming them from the perceptions that older generations may have of that same place. **Places are continually evolving; they are dynamic.**
3. **Sense of place can includes aspects associated with historic, cultural and built heritage, the natural environment, literature, art and gastronomy.**

#### **What are the issues and why are they important?**

4. Sense of place is important for citizens but also ensures a vital experience for visitors, meeting a current trend for distinctive and authentic experiences and encouraging repeat visitors. There is, however, a **need to balance the desire for the authentic with the need to manage and prevent negative impacts**.
5. The image and brand of a destination can contribute to a sense of place which can be a competitive marketing advantage. Sense of place can be formed before potential visitors have left home. **Tourists, citizens and media help to form the image and are jointly responsible.**
6. There is often more to a destination than first assumptions, and perceptions evolve and change over time.
7. **Re-enforcing a sense of place will often involve reducing citizen detachment and alienation from their neighborhoods.**

8. The **citizen–visitor interaction is central to forming an understanding of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and how to manage them.** However, this interaction is rarely actively managed so this opportunity is lost. Intervention can create richer experiences which can create better holidays and repeat custom.
9. **The pace of change of a destination can produce negative reactions from both locals and visitors,** and this can be perceived through sense of place. It is important to engage with locals to discuss how their places should or could evolve.
10. Retention of a sense of place is beneficial for citizens, visitors and businesses – **creating a better place to live and work in creates a better place to visit.**
11. **All stakeholders need to be included** in planning and management processes aimed at recognizing, developing and “managing” sense(s) of place, but **host communities perspectives need to be prioritized.**
12. **Integration of sense of place into existing management processes and strategies** is key.
13. **A sense of place and an association with a place can be created through storytelling, through reactivating heritage or culture, and can allow residents to rediscover or promote their history.**
14. A vital first step to any action plan involves understanding what makes up the sense of place in the destination. What is important to residents, what is attractive and interesting to visitors? **Identify common interests and potential impacts and tensions.**
15. **Practical steps can be taken to understand and manage the interaction between hosts and visitors, learning from experiences of other destinations around the world.** These may include:
  - Product development
  - Interpretation
  - Responsible marketing practice
  - Training and support for guides and businesses
  - Community involvement
  - Measuring and monitoring
16. **These practical actions and the management process should be captured in an action plan in order to identify whose responsibility it is to deliver on the agreed actions,** entailing:
  - Resilience (product diversification, seasonality, offers...)
  - Customer retention, loyalty, improving the visitor experience
  - Improving the destination through the involvement of all
  - Ensuring that the tourist can satisfy a set of desired experiences and that destinations ensure this is connected with the territory (or the place). This requires strengthening regulation and implementing strategies to achieve the decentralization of tourism while improving the economic sustainability of the activity.

### ***3.4 The extension of social participation in tourism: access to all***

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure time that allows them to fully develop the various facets of their personality and their social integration. The right to tourism is undoubtedly a concrete expression of this overall right, and the desire exists to render tourism universal and accessible for all.

Encouraging **inclusive tourism** which involves **both improving accessibility for groups with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or intellectual) and increasing the social participation in tourism by groups faced with economic limitations and geographic challenges.**

#### **Social Participation in Tourism:**

1. **Encourage the development of local tourism initiatives** that will bring livelihood opportunities to people living in Catalunya.
2. **Promote the importance of local traditions and cultures** as a product differentiator to what makes Catalunya unique.
3. **Recognise local businesses and organisations that play their part in using and promoting local products and ensuring a thriving destination environment and economy;** providing all of the ingredients that make holidays special today, and for years to come.
4. Help to **fund the conservation of natural and cultural heritage; and provide visitors with enjoyable and high quality experiences** by participating in the delivery of improved sustainable tourism experiences for both hosts and guests.
5. **Encourage the training and employment of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in tourism businesses.**

#### **Accessibility: Tourism for All**

1. **Firmly commit to the social inclusion of people with disabilities, by offering services and training** that guarantee accessibility to all areas of life and which enable them to develop autonomously and actively participate in their surroundings.
2. Promote **“Tourism for All” as an action for universal accessibility** to natural and cultural resources, sport, communications and events etc
3. Seek the **progressive removal of architectural barriers** in different areas, such as public roads, buildings, transport and communications
4. The tourism industry and its stakeholders must take responsibility for implementing or **supporting programmes and actions that ensure access for all tourists, recognising the potential of this market segment as a business opportunity** and a means to contribute to economic and social development
5. Social tourism activities must be characterised by affording **special attention to overall quality standards**, both in terms of amenities and staff service.
6. The group highly recommends that **monitoring, evaluation and reporting** becomes part of the overall declaration.

### **3.5 The management of cruise tourism in the Mediterranean**

1. **The nature of the cruise product.** Cruising has helped fulfil the rights of access to travel. However the growth of the cruise industry may be at the expense of customers not paying the full cost of the services received, which are paid as externalities by the destinations visited. **A sustainable, lasting product internalises its impacts, and a responsible industry acknowledges this need.**

2. **Sustainable product design.** Cruises and related services are designed with sustainability requirements. Amongst others this **includes environmental efficiency and protection measures, fair working and supplier conditions to be built into product design and contractual arrangements.** The most vulnerable suppliers suffer most.
3. **Supply chain management.** We must acknowledge that most hidden impacts occur through subcontracting and in the supply chains. **Environmental and socio-economic criteria must be incorporated for suppliers of services and goods to cruises and shore excursions.** This must be sensitive to the capacity of suppliers and include supplier development to benefit the local economy, when possible offering tours or excursions that promote local culture and help to protect the traditional way of life, providing a source of income to the destination.
4. **Integrated sustainability planning and management.** The scale of positive and negative impact of cruise companies and suppliers means that collaboration with destinations is essential. This needs to go beyond a focus on efficiency and effectiveness of operations and land- and sea-use planning and crowd management, to consider hidden negative impacts. **The introduction of new standards and practices will require industry-wide collaboration.**
5. **Transparency.** Destination, port, cruise companies and suppliers have the ethical responsibility to **develop management and public reporting systems going beyond regulatory requirements.** Stating creation of jobs and income as their social contribution is not enough. **Agreement on reporting criteria and methodologies will increase the ability to learn from each other and collaborate on best practices.**
6. **The flow of passengers visiting the city centre needs to be managed responsibly to avoid overcrowding, degradation and resource space and the displacement of the local population.**

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We, the partners in the organisation of the conference recognise that tourism has made a major contribution to the development of Barcelona and Catalunya and that a very large majority of people who live in the city and region feel that it is a great place to live. Richer experiences for tourists can contribute to creating additional livelihoods as well as additional cultural and recreational activities and facilities for local people, enriching experiences for local people and visitors alike.

We are grateful to the contribution of all the participants in the debate and formulation of this Final Declaration “**The Catalunya 2020 Vision for Responsible Tourism: The Barcelona Declaration**” in which the public and private sectors in tourism have agreed on the criteria, directives and commitments to be implemented in the future development of tourism in our territory: a tourism that promotes “Better places for people to live in, better places for people to visit”, valuing the resident, the environment and the temporary residents, our guests.

It has been very enriching to listen to international experts debate the five themes of the conference and we commit to work, jointly with the rest of the stakeholders, to take economic, social and environmental responsibility for tourism in the territory – we want to use tourism, not be used by it. We recognize that the path will not be easy, but requires commitment and action from each of the stakeholders during the forthcoming years. We look forward to informing others at future conferences of our progress, the challenges we encounter, and our achievements following this Declaration.

We look forward to participating in future Responsible Tourism in Destinations conferences and to sharing our experience of making tourism more responsible.

Signatures,

Dr. Ricard Santomà  
*Director*  
*TSI-Turisme Sant Ignasi*

Prof. Harold Goodwin  
*Leeds Metropolitan*  
*University*

Sr. Patrick Torrent  
*Deputy Director*  
*Agència Catalana de Turisme*

Sr. Pere Duran  
*General Manager*  
*Turisme de Barcelona*

Sr. Joan Torrella  
*Operations Director*  
*Tourism & Events*  
*Ajuntament de Barcelona*

Sr. Francesc Vila  
*Director Tourism Services*  
*Diputació de Barcelona*

