

# Chapter 11

## Conclusions: Tourism Sustainability and Improvement Plans



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As this book concludes, it is essential to summarise the critical mission we have engaged in: facilitating a shift towards the circular economy within the expanding tourism industry in the Valencian Region. This complex task has involved a multidimensional approach combining rigorous academic research, empirical field analyses, active collaboration with key stakeholders, and the development of the InnoEcoTur Innovation Platform.

This conclusion brings together the collective wisdom and insights gained, extracting valuable viewpoints and emerging ideas from our core sections: ‘Challenges and Opportunities,’ ‘Best Practices’, and ‘Research, Innovation, Competitiveness, and Production’. The closing remarks not only signify the culmination of our efforts but also serve as a comprehensive summary that outlines the practical steps for advancing towards a more sustainable, circular economy in the region’s tourism industry.

### Insights for Action

Our study of the challenges and opportunities has revealed that a significant shift in ‘impact culture’ is essential for a successful transition to a circular economy model. Rather than viewing sustainability as a burdensome obligation, the industry needs to

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perceive it as a strategic asset that can offer both economic and environmental dividends.

Our ‘Good Practices’ section is more than just a list of successful case studies; it is a template for action. The varied applications of circularity in hotels, restaurants, and even specialised tourism segments like wine and beer tourism, underscored that circular practices are versatile enough to be tailored to different business models and scales.

Finally, our in-depth look into ‘Research, Innovation, Competitiveness and Production’ revealed that the circular economy isn’t just an environmental strategy; it’s a comprehensive business model that can elevate an organisation’s competitive advantage. The relationship between green innovation and corporate performance signalled that businesses which are progressive in their environmental strategies often excel in their market performance as well.

## **Policy Implications and Future Work**

This book was not conceived as an endpoint, but rather as a dynamic tool that can evolve. Building on the foundation laid by InnoEcoTur, the work ahead involves translating these insights into policy initiatives and tangible business practices. Close collaboration between universities, government agencies, and the tourism industry will be vital in making this translation a success to deliver major impact.

The Valencian Innovation Agency, together with the Valencian universities and other political and business actors, can play a driving role in mainstreaming these best practices through policy frameworks. Similarly, future iterations of this project could delve deeper into the application of circular economy principles in emerging tourism sub-sectors and evaluate their long-term impacts.

## **A Call to Action**

We initiated this project with a sense of urgency, aware of the environmental impacts overshadowing the success of the tourism industry. As the project draws to a close, this urgency has been transformed into a sense of possibility. The circular economy isn’t a mere theoretical construct; it’s a roadmap for a sustainable future in Valencian tourism. We hope this book serves as both a guide and a catalyst, inspiring businesses and policymakers alike to enact change that is both profitable and sustainable.

In conclusion, the InnoEcoTur project has initiated a pivotal dialogue, and now it falls to all of us—academics, policymakers, and industry practitioners—to continue to move forward and turn it into actionable change. Here’s to charting a more circular, sustainable, and prosperous course for the Valencian Region’s tourism industry.

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