

## DRIVERS OF INNOVATION IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – THE CONEPT AND CASE OF ISTRIA DESTINATION

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – As one of the main drivers of competitiveness, innovation should be a subject of rethinking and reinforcing innovation efforts of stakeholders in tourist destinations. Increasing competitiveness through innovation ensures differentiation in the dynamic tourism market. The purpose of present study is to examine new potential drivers of innovation that affect the development concept of tourist destination based on sustainability.

**Methodology** – By integrating cognition from up to date conducted researches and recent scientific literature as well as adding some new potential drivers of innovation, author proposed a set of potential drivers of innovation as a part of sustainable tourism development. The data were collected using questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed to stakeholders in Istria region (Croatia) as tourist destination.

**Findings** – The factor analysis revealed four dimensions of potential drivers of innovation with impact on sustainable tourism product of Istria destination. Also, the factor analysis indicates that determination of innovativeness can be described with four dimensions. The results of this research highlight the need for innovation to help managers to make tourist destination fit for the future, as well as importance of intangible resources and new strategic orientation on tourist market place.

**Contribution** – This research provides useful insights for practitioners to understand the benefit of innovation drivers for the purposes of development concept. The research has academic contributions to the existing literature in field of innovation in sustainable tourism development. The paper also contributes as a basis for further research in the area of sustainable strategic development of tourist destinations.

**Keywords** innovation drivers, determinants of innovativeness, stakeholders, tourism policy, sustainable development

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