

## **Putting overtourism on the map: An exercise in intervention**

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### **Abstract**

We propose a novel comparison of stakeholder facilitation methods to address complex tourism challenges, particularly overtourism. Traditional facilitation has shown limited effectiveness, despite widespread use. Emerging play-based approaches offer an alternative by fostering emotional openness, creativity, and collaboration. This workshop series aims to examine, with conference attendees as participants, the effects of different approaches to stakeholder facilitation in the context of overtourism. Sixteen workshops will be conducted, each with five participants from academia and tourism practice. Using a shared map scenario of desirable and undesirable tourist flows, participants will collaboratively design interventions to reduce overtourism. Data will be collected through behavioral observation, qualitative analysis, and quantitative self-reports. The goal is to identify which methods foster the most effective, emotionally engaging, and actionable stakeholder collaboration for tourism planning.

### **Proposed Workshop**

To address issues of tourism impacts, a need has been identified to bring stakeholders from different and sometimes conflicting perspectives together, identifying broadly acceptable and future-proof strategies and forming compromises among their constituencies. Unfortunately, this need has been poorly addressed until now. On one hand, there is a wellspring of consultants available to facilitate such processes; on the other hand, there is little visible progress on the ground. A new model of facilitating stakeholder perspectives is needed.

New models of facilitation often make use of play. Deeply rooted in human biology and development, play creates positive emotions, encourages connection, and allows people to let their guard down and show their authentic selves. This proposal creates an experiment where conventional facilitation using the rapid prototyping approach is compared to three different play-based methodologies: Lego Serious Play, and two methods rooted in spatial, map-centered approaches: Tangible Landscape, which involves visualizing data on a physical model which can be manipulated, and AugGIS, which involves manipulating a map with gestures in augmented reality.

To test these models with behavioral, observational (qualitative), and self-response (quantitative) measurements requires multiple workshops to be run with each method. Thus, we aim to run 4 (facilitation method) x 4 (45-minute workshops) = 16 workshops of 5 participants each. Participants may comprise leisure, tourism, or hospitality academics, as well as practitioners from the field. The workshop is structured around a simple prompt: A map is shown illustrating different kinds of attractions—ones where a city wants more visitors, and ones where it wants less—and tourist flows of tourists that have been informed about each of these categories. Participants are then guided by trained facilitators in the

relevant method toward generating a collective answer to the challenge: design a viable intervention to reduce overtourism in this city. Measures include their behavior in speaking and turn-taking, as well as generating solutions and alternate perspectives (behavior); displaying emotion and emotion contagion (qualitative); enjoyment, intent to share, and intent to implement (quantitative).