

Entrepreneurship Education in Portuguese Tourism: Fostering Ideation, Innovation and Initiative



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Abstract At a time when it is important to start preparing the future and devise new ways for economic and financial recovery, we look back to some of the factors that helped Portugal take a significant leap in the quantity and quality of services related to tourism in the last decade. This chapter will address how state intervention, through an approach based on the triple-helix model, has helped new projects emerge. We analyse Turismo de Portugal's strategy and the Fostering Innovation in Tourism (FIT) programme and how it has been stimulating the economy around tourism through development of entrepreneurial and business skills. In order to do so, we will resort to the Tourism Creative Factory programme case study to see not only the methodologies used to foster and promote an entrepreneurial culture throughout the different regions of the country, but also to assess the role that this programme had in attaining the strategic goals set by Turismo de Portugal. The analysis of this case study will add to the literature on entrepreneurship education, as well as to research related to the history and evolution of tourism in Portugal.

1 Introduction

Due to its geographical position, good weather, moderate cost of living, low criminality rates and the quality of its endogenous resources and products, Portugal has been riding the tide and making the most of its touristic potential—especially in

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the last 10 years. The big qualitative and quantitative leap, as we will see, was made possible not only by big investments from already-established players, but also by a plethora of enterprises carried out by small companies, led by a new generation of entrepreneurs. Effectively, while the former investors have focused on a more traditional approach to hospitality, the latter have created (mainly) small, boutique projects that have been the disruptive driving force of this new chapter in the history of tourism in Portugal.

This myriad of initiatives and businesses centred around tourism has given the country new economic breadth and provided plenty of case studies in terms of creativity, attention to detail and innovation in the fields of hospitality and tourist experience. In the following pages we will analyse how this significant increase in entrepreneurial activity came about, i.e. how it was propelled and how it took shape through a series of initiatives meant to enable, train and empower people to ideate and create their projects. We will use Turismo de Portugal's FIT programme and its impact as case study. With this analysis, we aim to add to the literature on how strategic state intervention and coordination with people and businesses can help entrepreneurship and innovation in tourism. Moreover, this research matters given the scarcity when it comes to studies on entrepreneurship education¹ (and its implementation) in Portugal.²

Tourism (and its related activities) has become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic industries in the world. Currently, tourism directly contributes to about 4.4% to GDP, 6.9% of employment and 21.5% of service exports of the OECD economies. According to recent data, the tourism sector was bound to continue to grow. It was expected to present a weight of 17% of the Portuguese GDP and 20.9% of employment by 2025 (WTTC, 2016).

However, this was all before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (an era where tourism was in clear expansion in Portugal). There are no studies, as of yet, that demonstrate the impact of the ongoing pandemic³ (only projections). Nevertheless, Portuguese tourism players have reported average losses of 60% on their revenues (AHRESP, 2021) and dozens of small companies either apply for state support or file for bankruptcy by the hour. If and when the pandemic is over, *ceteris paribus*, it is predictable that this economic sector will somehow recover and continue to grow, but we cannot predict the direction of its growth or how things will play out in the near future. For that reason, we shall speak in general terms when considering the future and will mention mainly past events that led us thus far. In

¹We use this term to refer to the transfer and transmission of entrepreneurial skills. It is indeed the established term in the academic field and literature, and it is also the concept most closely associated with the approach of the case study analysed, according to the OECD (Lackéus, 2015).

²In this particular, we ought to highlight the work carried out by Daniel et al. (2017), entitled *Tourism Education: What About Entrepreneurial Skills?* This paper provides a very interesting and pioneer overview on the transmission of entrepreneurial skills in tourism courses. In a way, we intend to take that study further, provide an up-to-date state of the art, as well as the analysis of a case study concerning the way Turismo de Portugal articulated its strategy on entrepreneurship.

³Although the negative impact is rather clear (especially from March 2020 to March 2021).

fact, the size of the damage provoked by the pandemic and the governmental action enforced to prevent its spread reflect the size of the industry itself and an indicator of a mature sector.

The continuing growth of this sector has a significant impact on labour markets, since tourism is a significant source of employment, due to its high labour-intensive nature, mainly in a market like the Portuguese which is strongly influenced by tourism in its territory. The tourism sector has been the largest economic export activity in Portugal. In 2019, it was responsible for 52.3% of services exports and 19.7% of total exports (Turismo de Portugal, 2019).

This economic sector (which is now struggling to reinvent itself within the measure of the possible to fight back the impact of lockdowns and survive economic crises) has seen considerable development in the last decades. Its outlook as potential income source has also changed, as it has also been increasingly seen as attractive to young people and investors wanting to create value. Thus, there has been a rather considerable increase in the number of educational programmes offered by schools and higher education institutions in this field (Airey, 2005, 2016; Wang et al., 2013). The registered activity rate in Portugal, six months after concluding a tourism-related degree, is 90.0%. Of these students, 90.0% found a placement in less than three months. Moreover, 19.4% were integrated in the hotel or restaurant units where they did their internship (Turismo de Portugal, 2021a).

Nevertheless, due to the highly competitive environment of the tourism industry, entrepreneurship and innovation are crucial for dealing with current consumer, technological and environmental trends (Daniel et al., 2017). Innovation in tourism may contribute to the competitiveness of a state and lead to national prosperity and wealth. A specialised network focused on new ideas and business models associated with tourism, with the ability to revitalise and enhance innovation and the competitive growth of the sector (Hall & Williams, 2008). The Portuguese public body for tourism, Turismo de Portugal, has a network of schools that is also associated with the innovation initiative since decision-makers intend that students, when they finish their courses, can participate with their ideas in these ideation, acceleration and open innovation programmes. During their studies, they will have been stimulated to develop these ideas in the entrepreneurship syllabus (Turismo de Portugal, 2021b).

Students entering the tourism sector, with its high levels of volatility and rapid globalisation, need different skills and abilities to achieve meaningful and successful professional lives (Dredge et al., 2015). Thus, governments worldwide, such as the Portuguese and Spanish governments, adopt programmes aimed at taking action in supporting innovation to enhance national innovativeness (Hall, 2008). The FIT programme—Fostering Innovation in Tourism—by Turismo de Portugal is one of these programmes and it will be at the centre of our analysis. Indeed, several studies have elaborated on governmental interference in the area of innovation, government involvement on a national scale and the contribution that this involvement has brought into national systems of innovation (Edquist & Chaminade, 2006; Rodrigues et al., 2015).

In the context of tourism, various types of innovations that exist have been examined (Budiman et al., 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2015; Volo, 2005). Yet, there is

a lack of focus on the factors that contribute to the innovation factor and the role played by government (Batra, 2016; Edwards et al., 2008; Jugmohan & Giampiccoli, 2017). In fact, the definition of innovation is not yet stabilised. Therefore, it is widely discussed by several scholars the features and nature of innovation in an ever-changing, ever-evolving environment—in this case, tourism. Thus, a successful working definition has yet to be developed (Hjalager, 2010; Sardak et al., 2016).

In the tourism industry, innovation is often divided into five categories: Product or service innovations; Process innovations; Managerial or organisational innovations; Marketing innovations and Institutional innovations (Hall, 2009; OECD, 2018, 2020; OECD & European Union, 2005). Moreover, innovation can be influenced by the government's decisions, because it controls several policy instruments that can be used to influence and foster its various categories (Michael & Pearce, 2009). Typical government actions to promote innovation may include engaging in activities like R&D, funding the education sector, tax breaks, promoting the creation of innovation clusters and deployment of new technology (De la Vega & Stankosky, 2006). In fact, governmental influence is so great that it basically shapes the rules of the game through regulation, taxation and legal processes (Basheer et al., 2019; Mei et al., 2013).

Despite the many arguments for government involvement, others also stress the negative sides of public sector interest (Bryant et al., 2017; Hartley, 2005). Some claim that innovation policies have difficulty in helping up and coming economic activities that require long-term development (Barbero et al., 2021; Boschma, 2005). Although government involvement is inevitable due to its role as the ultimate guarantor of social rules and minimal conditions, an ultra-liberal approach to the subject might find that regulations limit the ability of individuals and groups to freely organise, debate and take initiatives by themselves to enhance allegedly, attain maximum efficiency—especially in highly-regulated societies (Etzkowitz, 2003). Nevertheless, it seems clear that tourism innovation at a national level is not effectively possible without government intervention, as it is crucial in the general economic development.

Considering, for instance, the example of a researched conducted in Norway regarding the role of governments in tourism innovation (Mei et al., 2013), the results confirmed that public investment through government does have a key facilitating role to play in terms of providing the framework in which the private sector can innovate—although true innovation and successful outcomes will depend on the involvement and drive from actors in both the private and public sectors. These results, despite being collected from Norway (which is a wealthy and well-developed country, and therefore with its own national, geographical and regional idiosyncrasies) may be applicable to other countries with similar stages of development in the field of tourism.

Another approach that worked well in regions with non-competing destinations was the Canadian Product Club Programme.⁴ Created in 1996, it promoted product development for 45 product categories through research and development facilitation (Weiermair, 2006). Two hundred and one co-ordinating partners and more than 5000 businesses cooperated through this product club programme. The author concluded that:

this poses the well-known policy question as to how much governments ought to spend on innovation projects in tourism on account of externalities and prohibitive risk and cost of process and product innovation and the indivisibility of research and development activities vis-à-vis a multitude of small user firms. (Weiermair, 2006)

Secondly, if it is clear that governments should get involved, the question is how money should be spent. A mention that deserves to be pointed out is the provision of a well-functioning, free market. In fact, the difference between North American versus European tourism companies' or entrepreneurial firms' mandatory regulation and point of view is substantial when innovation barriers are considered—with one key difference being the amount of bureaucracy existing in European cases. In the context of the above-mentioned literature we will provide insights into the Portuguese case—especially when it comes to programmes aimed at educating entrepreneurs and guide people through the process of setting up a business in the context of tourism.

2 The Portuguese Case

Tourism in Portugal is regulated and represented by a secretary of state, incorporated within the ministry of economics and digital transition. The institution that puts in practice the ministerial guidelines and serves as link between the government and the business community is Turismo de Portugal (TdP). This entity, which is a public institute and the national authority in all things regarding tourism, operates in two fronts, inwards and outwards; its mission rests on four main pillars: promote Portugal as travel destination; support the development of infrastructures and investment in the sector; develop and train human resources and regulate and oversee gambling activities. In order to carry out its purpose, TdP is divided into three sections: the planning section, which is in charge of devising strategies and carry out quality control; the business section, responsible for the development and maintenance of the business activity related to tourism in the country; and the support section, focused on activities such as communication, finance, HR and legal matters.

In order to materialise its mission with regard to the training of skilled professionals for the tourism and hospitality sector, TdP runs a network of 12 vocational

⁴For more on the discussion about innovation and sustainable tourism in Canada, see Thout et al. (2010).

schools, spread throughout the country. These schools, which have been inspired by the best international institutions (such as *EHL Lausanne Tourism School*), have been providing the different Portuguese regions with thousands of young graduates, that have received intensive training, looking to enter the labour force. Thus, TdP schools have been pivotal in setting higher standards and uplifting the overall quality of services in tourism and hospitality in the country.

In addition to the core training programmes, which are mainly job-oriented and focus on the basic specificities and know-how of hospitality, TdP has been expanding the scope of training through various initiatives. In 2017, TdP released an official document containing a global, 10-year strategy, for tourism in Portugal. Among the different goals and topics in the *Estratégia Turismo 2027*,⁵ one stands out: the importance of investing more in innovation and entrepreneurship.⁶ Indeed, the stimulation of innovation and entrepreneurship was signalled as one of the 10 overall goals of this strategy and much of its operationalisation is meant to be carried out through the fostering of an entrepreneurial culture, in which different stakeholders and players can become connected and promote the growth of the economy centred around tourism in particular and the overall economic growth and prosperity of the country in general.

In line with the guiding principles of its mission and the objectives enshrined in this document, the business section of TdP created the Fostering Innovation in Tourism (FIT)⁷ programme. This initiative, which we found to be aligned with the triple-helix model (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1995), linked the TdP⁸ with a network of business incubators and education programmes in the realms of business ideation and business acceleration. The goal is to empower the community⁹ with the necessary knowledge and motivation to develop and shape business models related to tourism and, ultimately, enable entrepreneurs to engage with the entrepreneurial ecosystem¹⁰ in order to start new, viable businesses. According to TdP the FIT programme has two strands (and therefore looks for two types of training in companies related to entrepreneurship education): one related to ideation, which is

⁵https://estrategia.turismodeportugal.pt/sites/default/files/Estrategia_Turismo_Portugal_ET27.pdf

⁶It should be noted that, before the final version of this document there was a document put to public scrutiny and discussion, in 2016. This was the year of the first edition of the Tourism Creative Factory. The success of this programme was acknowledged in the 2017 document by the then minister of economics, Manuel Caldeira Cabral in his opening note and the 2017 document underlines the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation more emphatically probably due to the globally positive impact of their 2016 initiatives around those topics.

⁷<http://business.turismodeportugal.pt/pt/Conhecer/Inovacao/programa-fit/Paginas/default.aspx>

⁸Especially through its schools. However, the programme is open to the broader community of entrepreneurs-to-be.

⁹We would like to underline that, the Tourism Training Talent programme (included in the TdP 2027 strategy) is aimed at providing students from TdP vocational schools with soft skills—many of them related to entrepreneurship. As we will see, FIT and its associated programmes fall into this scope.

¹⁰For a detailed account of the Portuguese entrepreneurial ecosystem and the main barriers to its development, see Banha et al. (2017).

carried out in partnership with the TdP schools; and another dedicated to acceleration and open innovation—which is promoted by the business incubators network. TdP also supports the presence of start-up companies at international tourism fairs.

The importance of the FIT programme has been paramount in changing the paradigm in the country when it comes to the scope of entrepreneurship education and its impact.¹¹ For instance, in 2020, 16 programmes were selected,¹² involving 327 startups and projects. With regard to the two strands, several companies have collaborated regularly with TdP to promote the entrepreneurship education initiatives that are inherent to FIT. However, two stand out: GesEntrepreneur (ideation) and Fábrica de Startups (acceleration and open innovation). The former through the Tourism Creative Factory programme (TCF) and the latter through the Tourism Explorers and Discoveries programmes. We will now look into the TCF case study in order to provide an account of the methodologies used and how they created an impact in the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the years.

3 Case Study: Tourism Creative Factory

As mentioned, the TCF is an entrepreneurship education programme, provided to TdP by the company GesEntrepreneur, focused on business ideation. Starting in 2016, TCF had, so far, five editions. According to reports given by GesEntrepreneur to TdP (and validated by this institute), the hard numbers boil down to: involvement with eight schools (seven in Portugal's mainland and one in the Azores), 316 project applications, 189 projects (approved after the first stage) and 281 entrepreneurs. However, even with such loquacious numbers, it is important to tell the story behind them and how TCF, through its methodologies, has successfully worked to maintain its partnership with TdP, encompass its demands and challenges and be able to attain the above-mentioned numbers.

Founded in 2006, GesEntrepreneur has been working with (and within) the Portuguese entrepreneurial ecosystem. Resorting to a “learning-by-doing” approach, the company has consistently worked with several public and private institutions, such as intermunicipal communities, Government of Azores or EDP—Energias de Portugal (the county's main electric utilities company). With regard to the

¹¹Ideation programmes, which eventually lead to venture creation, according to the OECD (Lackéus, 2015): “allows for the development of entrepreneurial passion and perhaps even entrepreneurial identity in some learners. The value created as formal part of curriculum can be so significant that it sometimes leads to real-life economic growth for the collaboration partners outside the educational institution. The final output of the embedded approach is more entrepreneurial people creating new kinds of value in all domains of society and all walks of life”.

¹²Four in the realm of ideation, five acceleration programmes and seven open innovation programmes. It should be noted that all entities that promote these programmes answer a public call released by TdP. The programmes are selected and contracted based on the merit of the proposal.

involvement in the FIT programme, GesEntrepreneur designed TCF to help improve the output (both in quantitative and qualitative terms) of viable business ideas. In other words, to promote the development of entrepreneurial and business skills, through training, in those in charge of their projects. TCF also allows its participants to engage with regional entrepreneurial ecosystems, the possibility to integrate circular economy initiatives and connect with qualified mentors/businesspeople that will enrich their experience.

In practical terms, the TCF programme consists of a six-step course with a multidisciplinary approach to business (product design, marketing, financial education, business management and tourism). The courses usually run for 10 or 14 weeks. During this timeframe there is a dimension of continuous self-improvement.¹³ Also, given that the FIT programme is decentralised, so has been the TCF.¹⁴ This can be better understood by explaining the process; the six steps are the following¹⁵:

1. Open call

This is the first stage of the TCF programme. As the name implies, this a period when a call is released and interested applicants submit their proposals online. A preliminary screening occurs at this moment, i.e., only projects that fall within the scope of, at least, one of the eligible business areas (a factor that is pre-determined by TdP) are accepted. Since the TCF programme is sponsored by TdP, the TCF experience is free for applicant who sees their projects selected. The projects with most potential (around 40) are selected and continue to the next stage of the process. The selection criteria are: the degree of innovation; viability; overall potential impact for the tourism sector; maturity of the project and merit of the team.

2. Bootcamps

Bootcamps (applied to the TCF context) are intensive training moments in which there is a strong interaction between the participants and the training staff. They occur in different cities and usually last for three days. On the one hand, bootcamps allow participants to be fully immersed in a setting where they must

¹³Entrepreneurship skills presuppose that they are known and understood (JO EU, 2018: C 189/11) “(...) project planning and management methods (...) strategic thinking, critical and constructive reflection on the evolving creative processes and about innovation (...) ability to work individually and as a team, to mobilize resources (people and things) and to develop a sustainable activity (...) ability to make financial decisions related to cost and value (...) communicate and to negotiate effectively with others and to deal with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk as elements of the informed decision-making process”.

¹⁴One of the TCF’s goals is to bring to people outside the Lisbon area specialised training and entrepreneurial culture. During this process, people will be exposed to a course based on the best international practices and promote networking activities.

¹⁵To some extent, TCF mirrors the broader methodology used in other programmes and initiatives promoted by GesEntrepreneur—which are based on international best practiced and adapted to the Portuguese context (especially its entrepreneurial ecosystem and geography). For a detailed overview and explanation of these programmes, see Banha et al. (2021).

develop their communication skills, take part in training activities and focus on improving their projects upon receiving feedback and inputs from different coaches. On the other hand, bootcamps aim to assess the specific needs of each team, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each project, in order to address those issues through a custom-made plan.

3. Regional Demonstration Day (whenever possible)

To conclude the bootcamps, the communication skills and the maturity of each project and team are put to the test. In a public session, where the entrepreneurial community or that specific region, coaches, staff and TCF ambassadors are present, the participants must pitch their ideas. The interventions are recorded for future reference and analysed by the TCF staff in order to evaluate what should be addressed first in the following step and track the evolution of the project and the team throughout the programme. This step is part of the overall methodology. However, due to practical and specific reasons, sometimes, the public session does not occur. All of the other elements are still carried out.

4. Business modelling

This stage focuses on the development of the projects. To that end, contact with several business modelling tools and concepts is provided to participants who take classes on: pitching ideas; minimum viable product; pivoting; branding; business model/lean canvas; branding; business model; legal and compliance basics; fundraising and strategic communication. Since the TCF has the ambition of being a far-reaching programme, this stage also occurs in different areas of Portugal, in partnership with the nearer TdP schools.

Throughout the years, point of contact in these schools has been designated as ambassadors, who work closely together with the TCF staff. The programme endeavours to provide an experience as homogeneous as possible, regardless of the area, i.e., put participant in contact with same number of mentors and tutors, and allow them to participate in side-events as well. Given that there is a great concentration of ideation programmes in Lisbon for obvious reasons, the TCF assumes the social commitment of reaching different areas and provide a broad territorial coverage. This stage usually lasts for about 2 months.

5. Mentoring

During this stage the participants are put in contact with experts in the field. They are given access to classes and workshops on specific aspects of tourism and engage in networking activities. The mentors, who are already-established personalities in their fields of business, interact formally with participants (in one-on-one sessions or in classes) and informally (such as in the casual setting of a business lunch or dinner). Some of these mentors are also investors or business angels and may provide interesting advice in various aspects of business or network tips.

6. National Demonstration Day

This is the zenith of the TCF programme. After successfully completing the business modelling stage, participants will have the chance to publicly present their improved projects. This event will take place in a high-profile venue in a Portuguese city. Tourism experts, investors and representatives of potentially

interested companies will be among the audience. In the end, a certificate of conclusion is issued, along with a letter of recommendation stating the development stage and potential of each project.

The TCF programme has had the same structure since its inception and continues to improve, following a *kaizen* philosophy based on the feedback provided by previous participants, the profile they present and the needs they show in general. Recently, due to the covid-19 pandemic, some changes had to be put in place to accommodate the new reality of education methods and the hospitality sector in the country. Based on the best possible knowledge, i.e., studies and projections available throughout the world, GesEntrepreneur identified one particular field of business (within the broader scope of TdP) that show resilience, still has room to grow during the pandemic situation and will, hopefully, be more economically relevant in the future: gastronomy. This adaptation is part of the sustainable entrepreneurship *ethos* of the TCF. Resorting to a similar structure, the 2021 edition of the TCF programme had the subtitle “food edition”,¹⁶ since it focuses specifically on gastronomy, endogenous products and initiatives around wine tourism.

4 Outcomes

Having presented here the history and functioning of the TCF programmes as part of the broader strategy by TdP to boost entrepreneurship in Portugal in the field of tourism, we should highlight some of the results of the FIT Programme.

With regard to the acceleration and innovation strand, a report from Fábrica de Startups,¹⁷ which traces the evolution of their two programmes (Discoveries and Tourism Explorers) from 2015 to 2020, states that, in eight editions (five from the Discoveries Programme and the remaining three pertaining to the Tourism Explorers programme), 1124 applications were received, 380 startups were created and 932 entrepreneurs were reached. Of those 380 startups, 60% were still active in 2020, 30% received external investment to stimulate their growth and 39% of those startups had managed to internationalise their business/service. If we add the TCF programme results to these numbers,¹⁸ from 2015 to 2020, 1443 projects submitted their application to these three programmes and a total of 1213 entrepreneurs actively participated in them (an average of 243 per year).

Moreover, the TCF programme has been the genesis of some successful businesses (across the whole country) that have contributed to change the landscape of

¹⁶<https://tourismcreativefactory.com>

¹⁷<https://www.fabricadestartups.com/blog/25/2020/relatorio-de-impacto-startups-de-turismo>

¹⁸It should be noted, once more, the difference in the nature of the initiatives on ideation and those on acceleration. The TCF, by its own nature and size of its structure, supervises fewer projects than acceleration projects.

travel and accommodation services. We shall mention a few examples. Amicis Gin¹⁹ was created in 2016. After a partnership with a business angel, the brand was created. The product utilises endogenous resources from the Beiras regions in its formula and has already a solid implementation in the Portuguese market. Coimbra Airport Shuttle²⁰ is also another good example. Given the fact that the Portuguese mainland is served, mostly by three airports (in Porto, Lisbon and Faro—which serves specifically the Algarve), this service allows an unprecedented access to people from the Centro region to both Porto and Lisbon airports. Another example is Eco Soul Guest House Ericeira,²¹ a small and cosy Guest House, located between the beach and the valley of Sao Juliao, inserted in the World Surfing Reserve of Ericeira. The name Eco Soul refers to the decisions that the founders made when they started this project on what concerns the sustainability and environment issues. Abrigo Queijo Serra da Estrela DOP²² is one of the latest investments made by a public venture capital firm and consists on a Museum that will gather and show all the material and immaterial heritage on the ancestral manufacture of Serra da Estrela Cheese. Finally, TryPortugal,²³ which has attracted funding from a venture capital firm, has also built a reputation in being a provider of customised experiences in the context of active tourism, using as background the cultural and natural heritage of the country.

Overall, the FIT programme and its associated initiatives have actively contributed not only to boost the quantity and quality of services in Portugal but has also become an example of continued commitment and investment in entrepreneurship education programmes.

5 Final Remarks

Entrepreneurship education is a field in expansion in Portugal, with much room for further implementation. The FIT programme and the results we have presented are important evidence of the impact that this type of education can produce in a very unequal territory, marked by regions of very high or very low density in terms of population and wealth. The TCF programme has strived to reach various zones of Portugal and help entrepreneurs make the most of the characteristics and resources of their regions. Hopefully, this text will shed new light on the state of the art concerning entrepreneurship education in Portugal (especially when it comes to

¹⁹<https://amicisgin.com/en/>

²⁰<https://www.airportshuttle.pt>

²¹<https://www.ecosoulericeira.com/pt-pt/?fbclid=IwAR1FvuHLeJ7Ggw8GCW-bCyimBLzX9POVEMQINWMOg8XI-X-3ycBgRzI5yT0>

²²<https://abrigoqueijoserradaestrela.pt/en/>

²³<https://tryportugal.pt>

the tourism and hospitality sector) and help explain the qualitative and quantitative leap that the country has taken in the last decade.

It should be noted that only an efficient operationalisation of the strategic guidelines of TdP can guarantee the fostering of innovation in tourism. The concrete data presented here should not only contribute to the academic discussion around the innovation in tourism in Portugal and Spain but may also contribute to the wider research about the relevance of entrepreneurship education. Indeed, the success of the FIT programme²⁴ seem to bring to the fore proof that these initiatives do have a significant reach and fulfil their purpose. Perhaps this example may be able to shape the creation of future evidence-based policymaking around entrepreneurship education or encourage further research on the topic. Ultimately, all of these initiatives are bigger than the sum of the parts. This is a mosaic, consisting of hundreds of pieces (some larger, some smaller) that coexist within the same frame and are, somehow, interconnected.

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²⁴In 2018, the UNWTO awarded the TdP schools and their Tourism Training Talent initiative with the first place in the 14th edition of the UNWTO prizes. It was considered an example of training of future generations of human resources in the sector (<https://escolas.turismodeportugal.pt/en/p/about-us/>). It should be noted, that TCF had already been involved with TdP and its schools since 2016.

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