

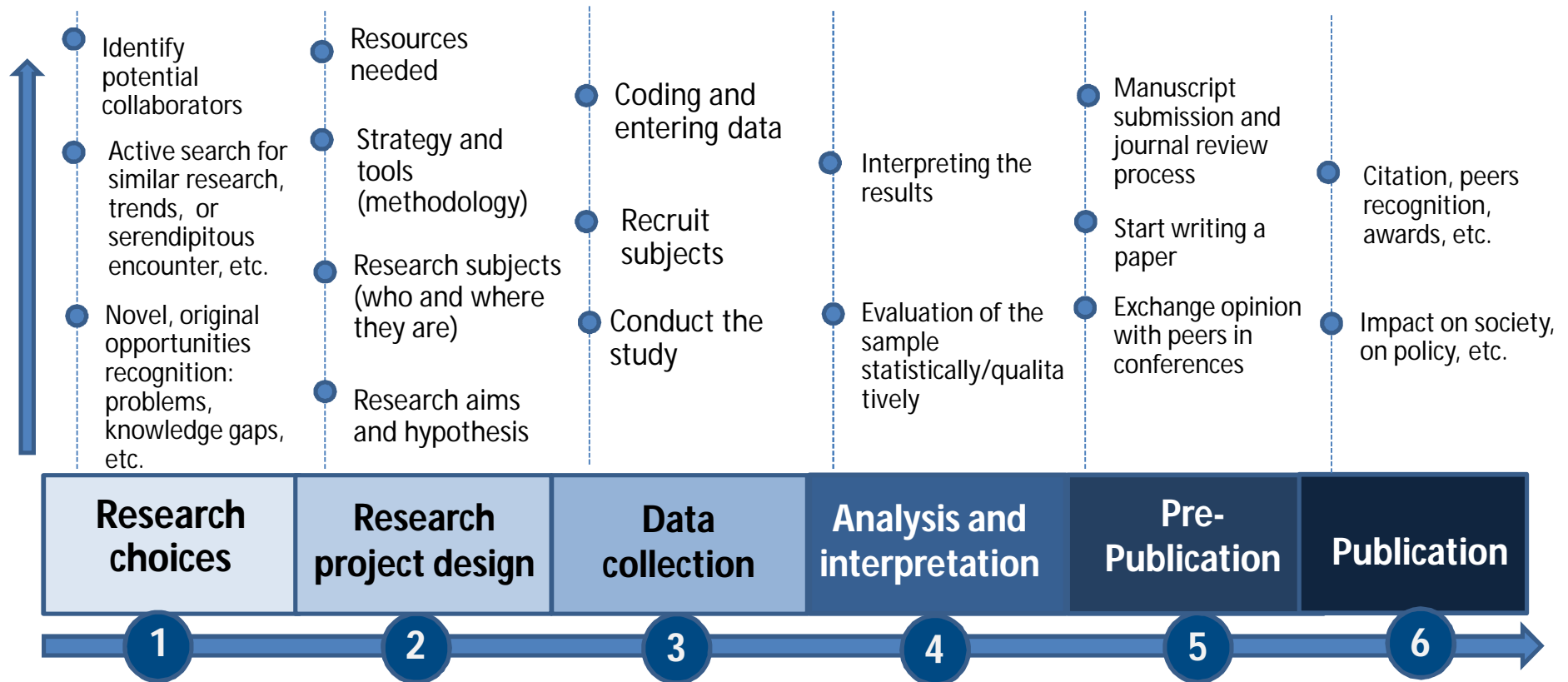
# Exploring the research process through the innovation journey of tourism entrepreneurs case study



I INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY RESEARCH  
18th April, Alicante

*Dr Isabel Rodríguez*  
*Institute of Tourism Research*  
*University of Alicante, Spain*

# 1 The research process

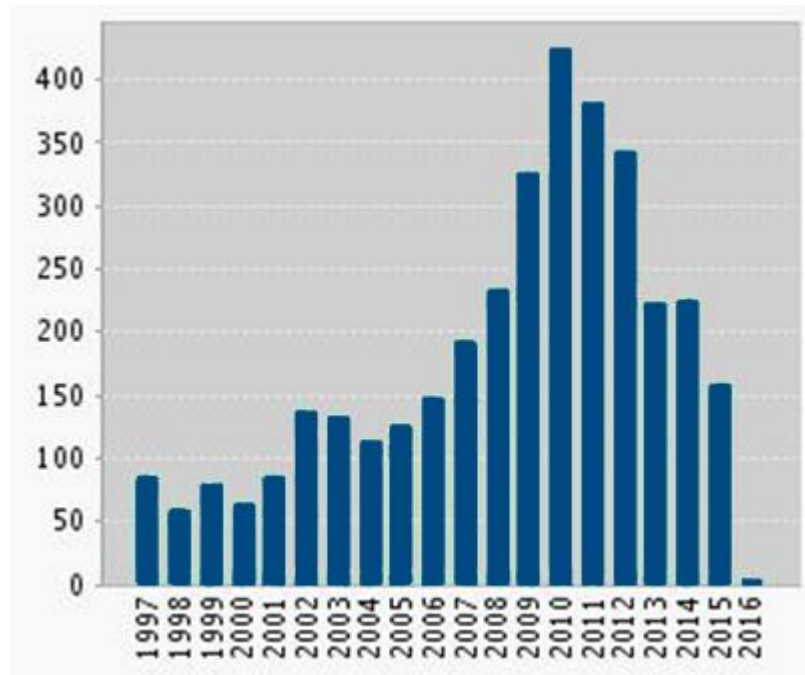




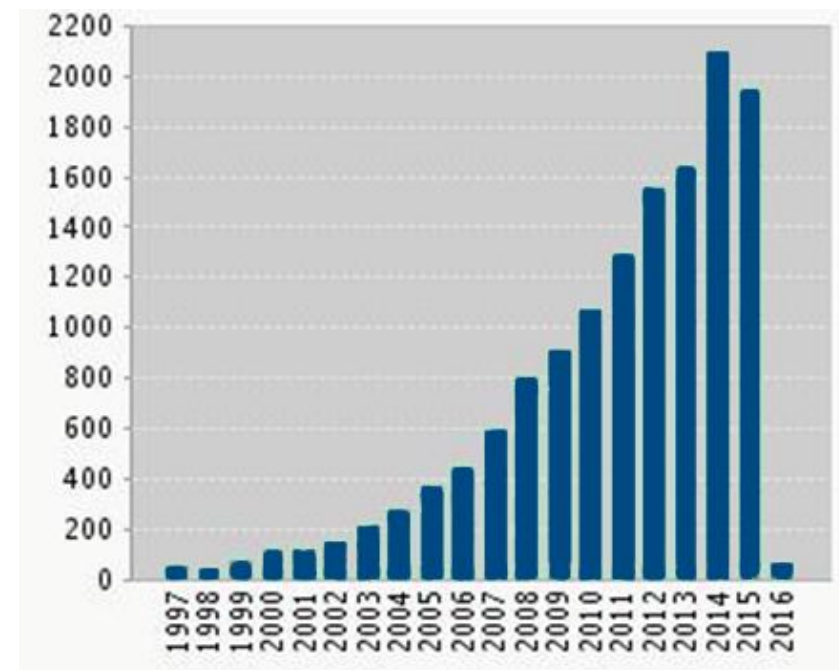
# 1 My research choice

Tourism innovation is a novel area of research

Published items in the latest 20 years



Citations/year in the latest 20 years



Topic of the search: tourism innovation

Source: Web of science



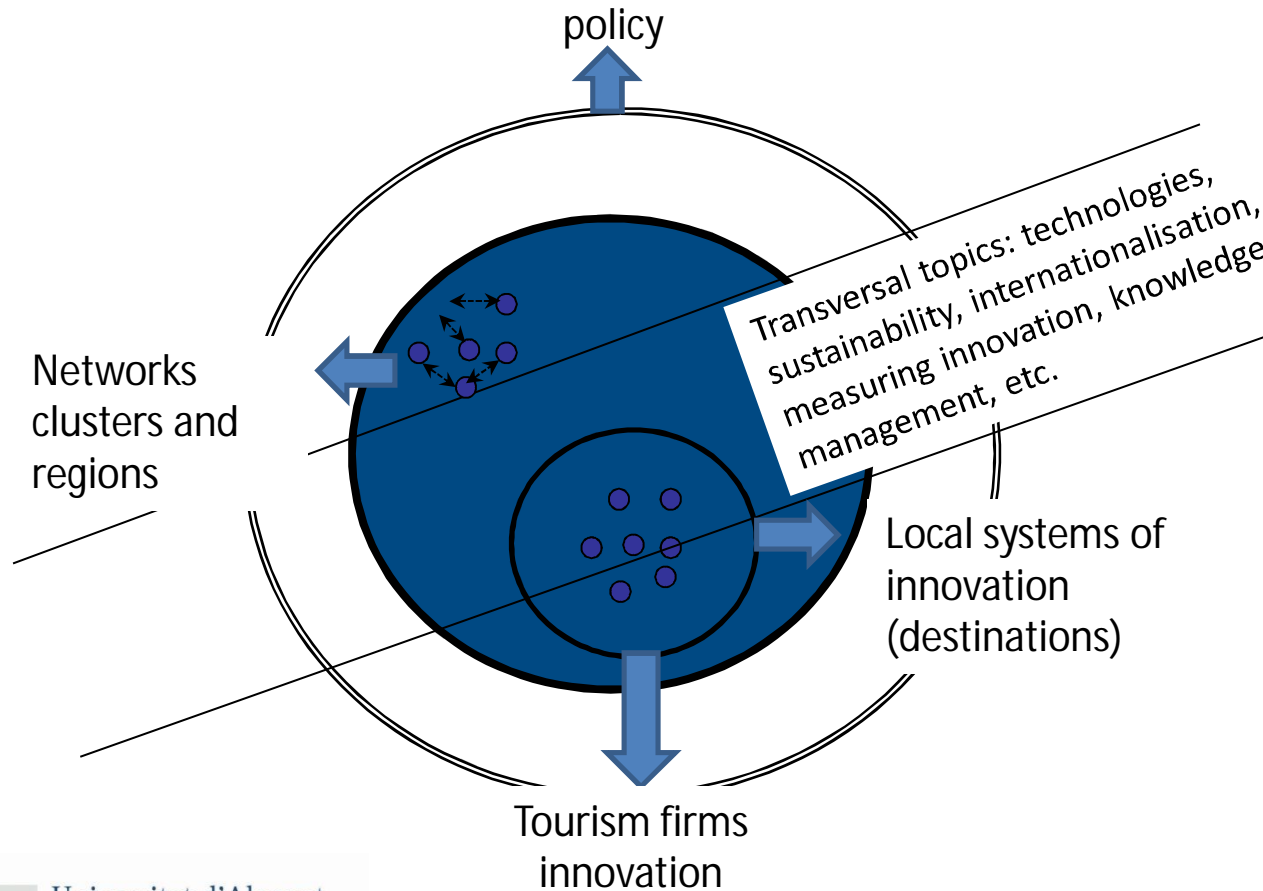


# 1 My research choice

National systems of tourism innovation.  
Government and tourism innovation

## Main areas of research so far...

### ...but still fragmented studies and many gaps and challenges...





# 1 My research choice

**1**  
 THE CHALLENGE: UNDERSTANDING  
 INNOVATION EMERGENCE

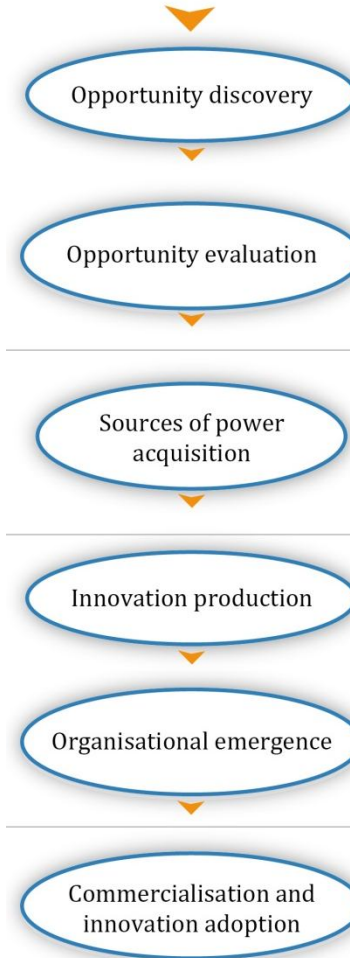
OPENING THE BLACK  
 BOX OF THE  
 INNOVATION PROCESS



**2**  
 MY RESEARCH  
 CHOICE

Work with innovative  
 entrepreneurs to  
 explore their  
 innovation journey

Innovative  
 entrepreneurs



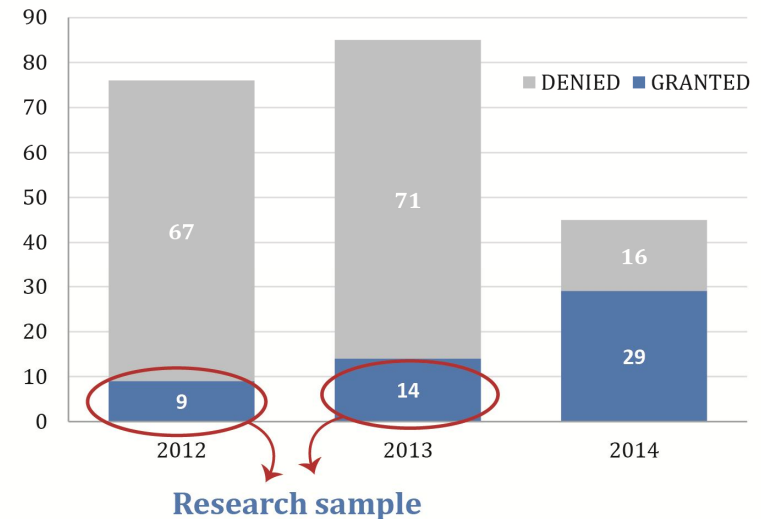


## 2 How I designed my research



A controlled sample of firms participating in a public programme (Emprendetur in Spain) which grants loans to young entrepreneurs (under 40) with innovative projects in tourism.

Number of proposals funded and denied by Emprendetur Young Entrepreneurs, 2012-2014





## 2 How I designed my research

### 2-stage methodology

1) Desk research about the firms and their founders: types of innovations, founders identity, position and background: web site analysis and LinkedIn public information to determine prior knowledge and experience brought into the process.

LinkedIn



Jaume Mayor i Agell

CEO y fundador en WeSmartPark

Barcelona y alrededores, España | Ingeniería industrial o mecánica

Únete a LinkedIn y accede al perfil completo de Jaume Mayor i Agell. ¡Es gratis!

Como usuario de LinkedIn, te unirás a 300 millones de profesionales que comparten contactos, ideas y oportunidades.

- Descubrir a quién tú y Jaume Mayor i Agell conocéis en común
- Hacer que te presenten a Jaume Mayor i Agell
- Contactar con Jaume Mayor i Agell directamente

[Ver el perfil completo de Jaume](#)

Resumen de Jaume Mayor i Agell

Actual	CEO y fundador en WeSmartPark (by 9SMART)
Anterior	CTO y fundador en 3J3D INGENIERIA DE DETALLE, S.L. Proyectista estructuras metálicas con TEKLA en ELTE ESTRUCTURAS METÁLICAS S.A. Herrero oficial de 2ª en TALLER ESTRUCTURA METÁLICA VILASSAR
Educación	ESADE Business School Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA CATALUNYA



## 2 How I designed my research

The entrepreneurial **personality**

The influence of **learning**.  
Entrepreneurial attributes acquired by education

Complementary skills and knowledge of the entrepreneurial team

Career progression.  
Previous **work experience**  
connection with new entrepreneurial venture  
Previous entrepreneurial experience  
Entrepreneurial team networks

NAME/AGE	ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSONALITY, SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES	POSITION	EDUCATION	FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE	PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE
	Leadership, proactivity, emotional intelligence, multicultural mind, creativity and innovation, negotiation skills, flexibility and results orientation. Passionate about travel and people development	Founder and CEO at Exoticca	2002-2003 International Master in Tourism and Leisure - ESADE Business School	Tourism/ E-commerce/ Leisure/ Management/ Revenue Analysis/ Hotels/ Online Marketing/ Marketing Strategy/ Hospitality/ Tour Operators/ Online Advertising/ Business Strategy/ SEM/ Pricing/ Online Travel/ Web 2.0/ Google Analytics/ Digital Marketing/ PPC/ Internet Entrepreneur/ Google Adwords/ SEO/ Airlines/ Email Marketing/ Affiliate	May 2013-present Founder and CEO (Exoticca)
1998-2001 Diploma in Business and Tourism Activities - ESERP Barcelona			2011-2013 Tour Operation Responsible (Privalia Travel*)		
1992-1995 Diploma in Special Teaching - Leon University			2011-2011 Tour Operation Manager (Voyage Prive**)		
			2007-2011 Assistant General Manager (Karisma Tours) 2004-2007 Front Office Manager (IAC Hotels)		





## 2 How I designed my research

2) Qualitative approach:  
**semi-structured interviews** so the innovators can narrate their **journey from idea generation to innovation diffusion**: idea emergence, motivation to invest in tourism, critical moments and obstacles, networking, etc.





### 3 Data collection

- Between July and September 2014, 24 entrepreneurs interviewed through *Skype*
- Transcription of audio recordings

### 4 Analysis and interpretation

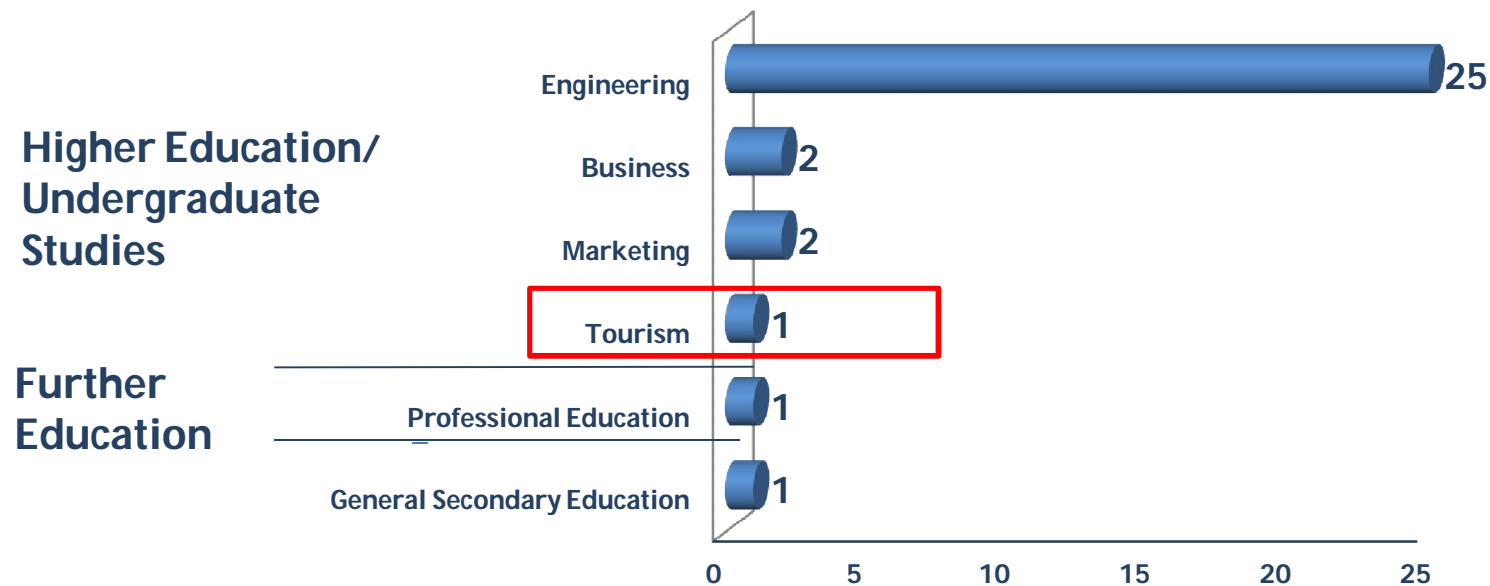
- Discourse analysis: data reduction through code application, categorizing, recurrent themes, relevant quotes, etc.
- Analysis of the innovators background



## 4 Analysis and interpretation

As a surprising discovery...“**New-to-tourism**” entrepreneurs

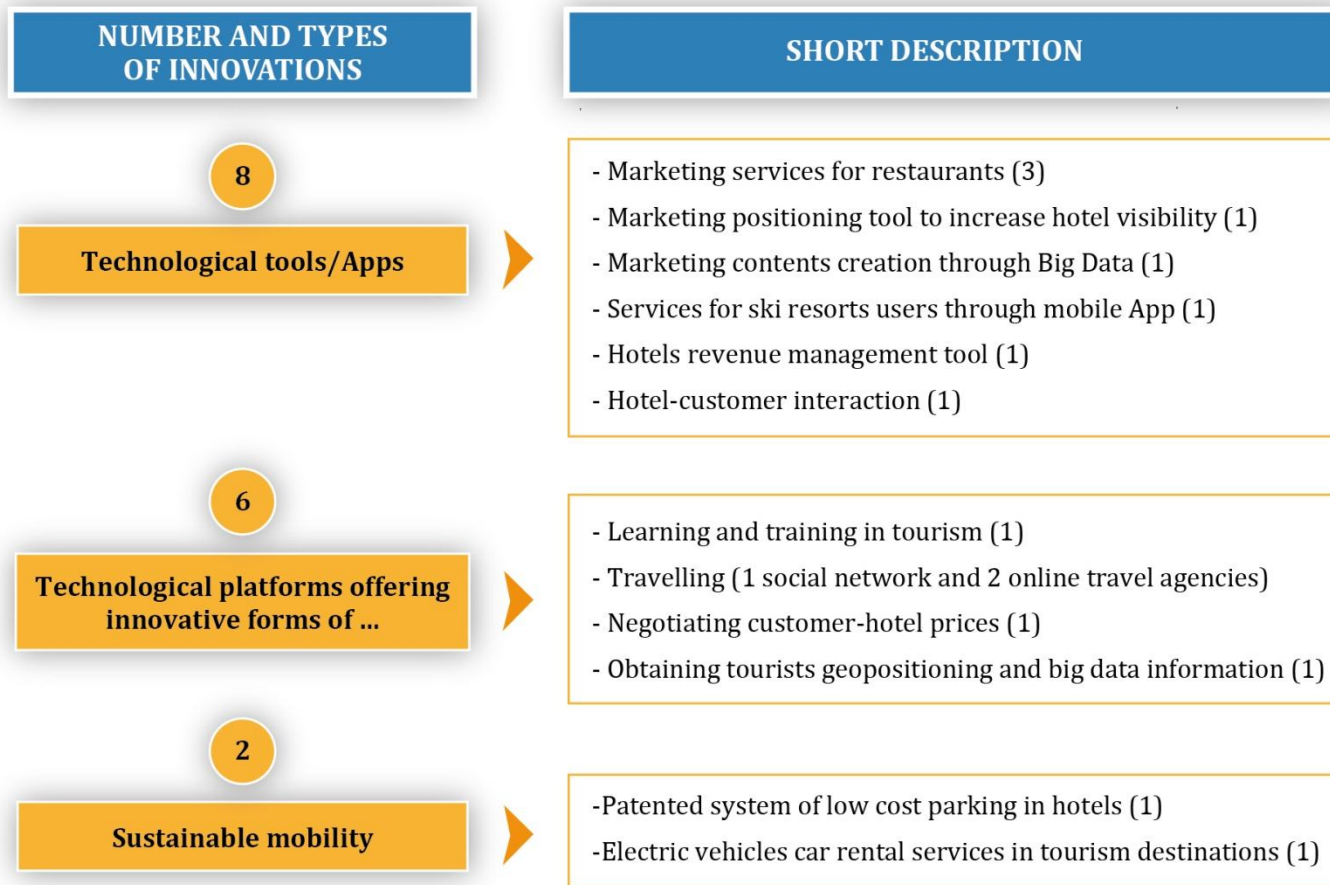
Fig 1. Entrepreneurs’ Educational Background



Source: Own elaboration based on LinkedIn profiles. A total sample of 32 founders and co-founders.



## 4 Analysis and interpretation







## 4 Analysis and interpretation

As a surprising discovery...**"New-to-tourism"** entrepreneurs.  
Possible interpretation:

- In tourism brought-in technology is an important driver of innovation.
- **In Spain, tourism programmes do not formally encourage innovative entrepreneurship** (either undergraduate and postgraduate studies) **through specific subjects**. They tend to prepare students to work for the industry.
- **Innovative capacity of the tourism sector to generate in-house innovation?**

Source: Own elaboration based on LinkedIn profiles. A total sample of 32 founders and co-founders.



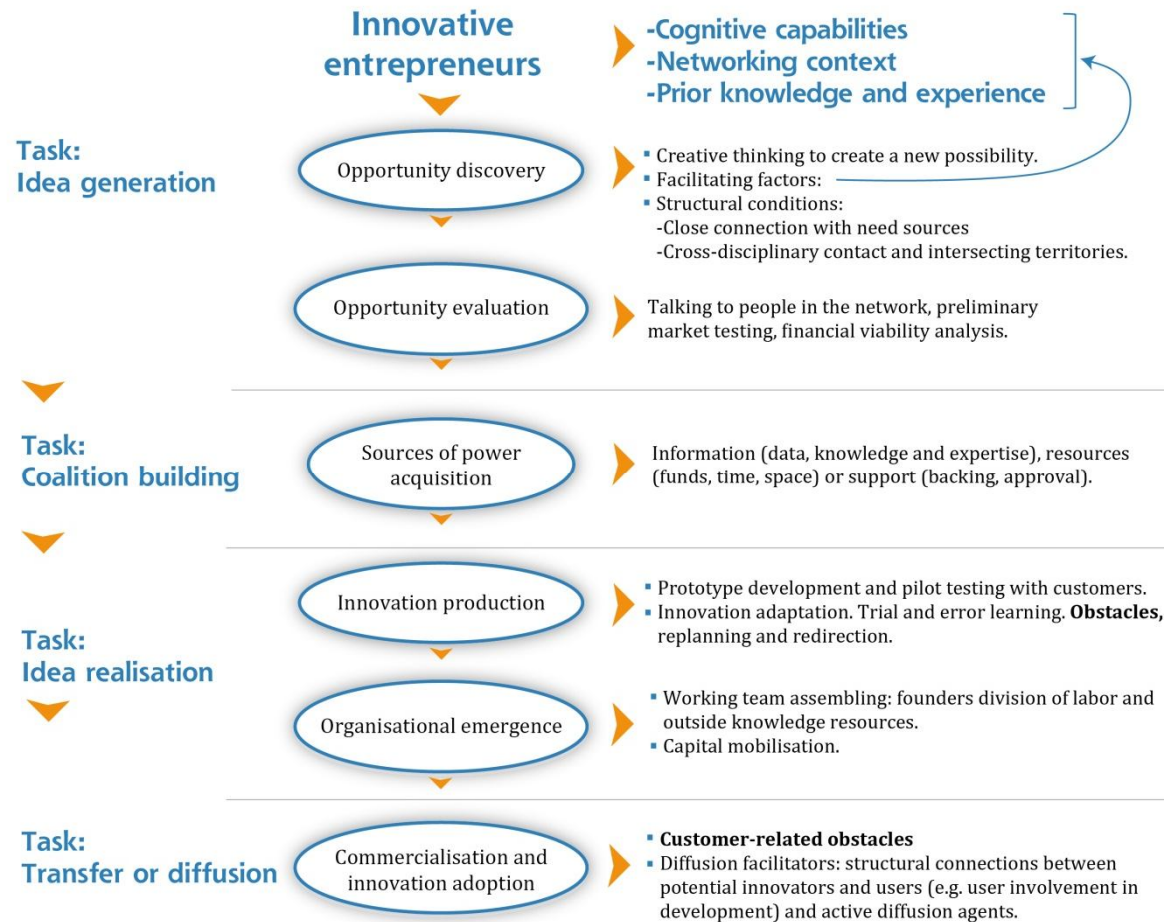
## 4 Analysis and interpretation

**What led these individuals to create innovative ventures in tourism?**

- Tourism a relevant, strong and strategic economic sector with less risk and uncertainty.
- Tourism a technology-laggard sector and niche-subsectors (e.g. restaurants, ski resorts)

## 4 Analysis and interpretation

Interpretation of the process and key observations





## 5 Pre-publication and publication

Diffusion of findings at:

- 23<sup>rd</sup> Nordic Symposium on Tourism and Hospitality Research, Copenhagen Denmark 1-4 October 2014
- International Tourism Hospitality and Events Conference organised by the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Surrey, 19-22 July.

Working on a paper near to submission to a high impact journal (Annals of Tourism Research).



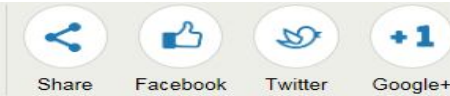


# What's next, new challenges

Friday 05 Feb 2016 , from [School of Hospitality and Tourism Management](#)

## The innovation journey of tourism entrepreneurs

Professor Allan Williams and **Dr Vlatka Skokic** of the University of Surrey and Dr Isabel Rodriguez of the University of Alicante awarded EU Marie Curie Research Fellowship.



### Featuring



**Professor Allan Williams**

Chair in Tourism and Mobility Studies



**Dr Vlatka Skokic**

Lecturer in Entrepreneurship

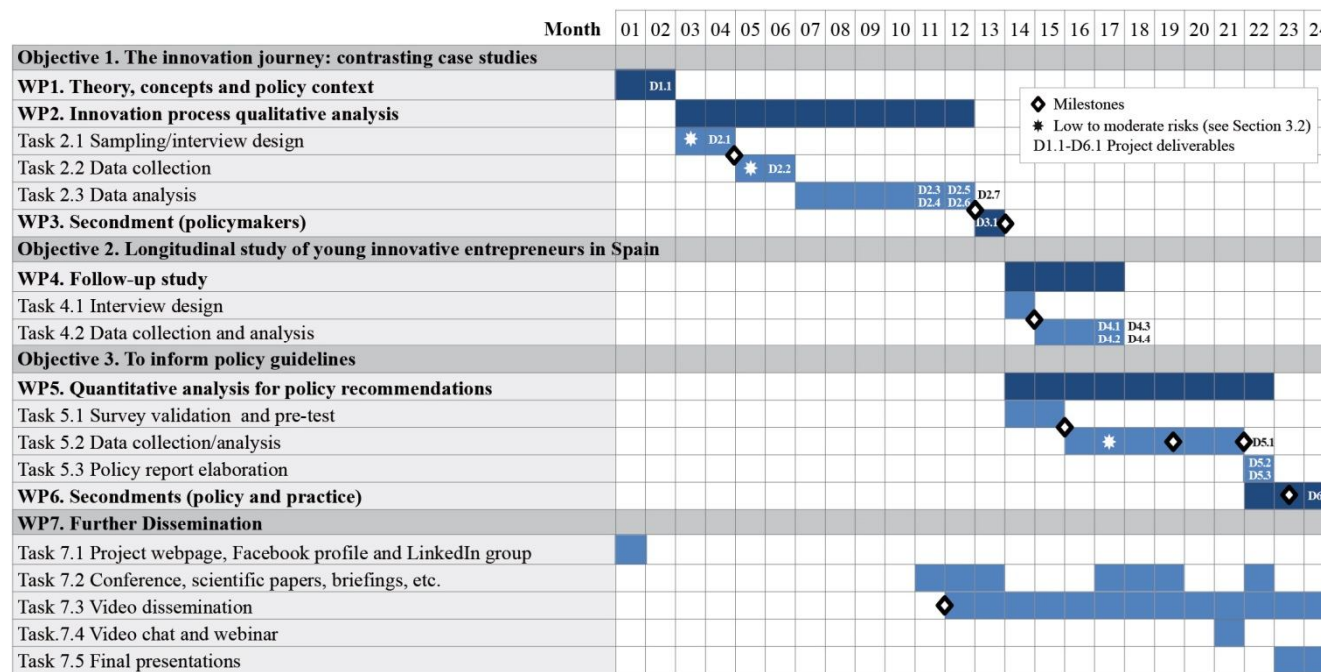
Professor Allan Williams and Dr Vlatka Skokic of the University of Surrey and Dr Isabel Rodriguez of the University of Alicante have been awarded an EU Marie Curie Research Fellowship to conduct a two-year study that will contribute to bridging the gap between research on innovation and entrepreneurship in tourism, and tourism innovation policies. The main aim is to deepen understanding of the different stages of the innovation journey followed by entrepreneurs in tourism. It will examine not only the classic start up process, such as opportunity recognition, development and early implementation of innovation in the market, but also the subsequent stages of business performance (discontinuance, growth, further innovation, etc.).

The proposed study has three main objectives:

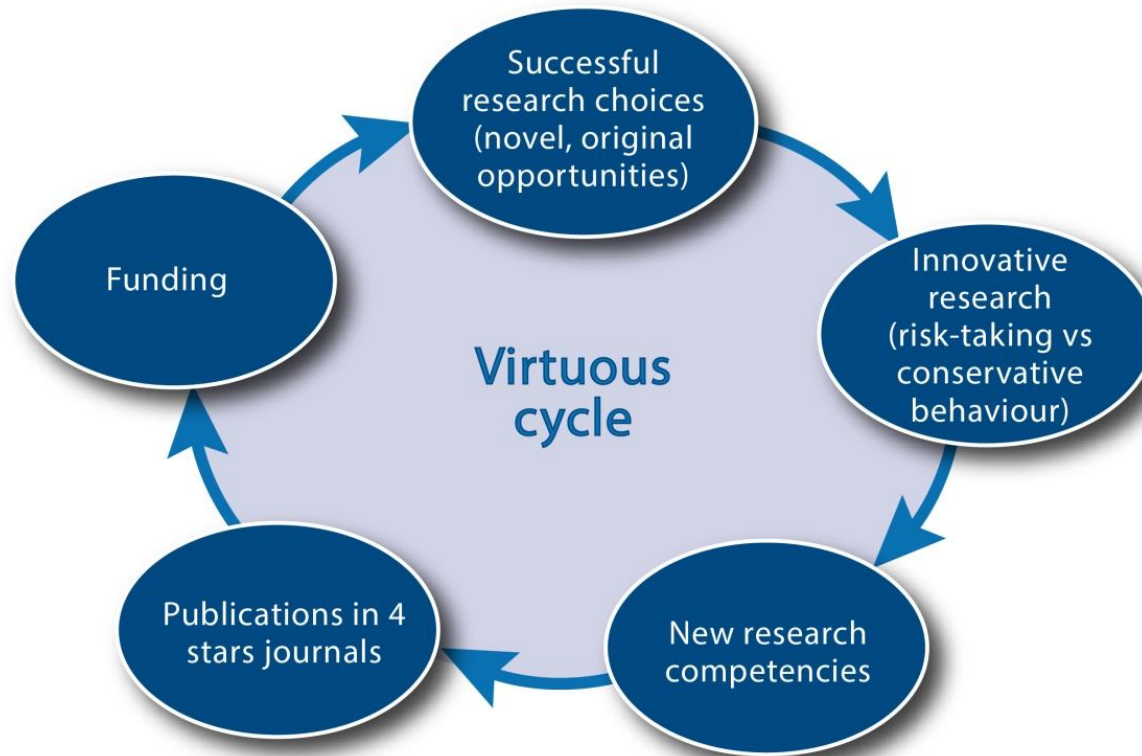


Entrepreneurship behavior  
 transformation **innovation**  
 entrepreneurial  
 adventurous opportunity ideas

- **Follow-up** study (innovation failure or success).
- **Different types of innovators** and **innovations**. Influence of different institutional and tourism settings (Comparisons between UK and Spain).
- Extract policy recommendations and implications.



Entrepreneurship behavior  
transformation **innovation**  
entrepreneurial  
adventurous **opportunity ideas**



transformation **innovation**  
entrepreneurial

Entrepreneurship behavior  
transformation **innovation**  
entrepreneurial  
adventurous **opportunity ideas**

**Thank you very much for your attention!**

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University of Alicante, Spain*



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transformation **innovation**  
entrepreneurial