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Challenges for business tourism development in Porto

Jorge Marques. Portucalense University and University of Coimbra, Portugal.

Micaela Pinho. Portucalense University and University of Aveiro, Portugal.

Abstract

Business Tourism contributes with an important weight to tourism revenues and has a great development potential in the city of Porto. It encompasses a variety of activities, ranging from specific equipment and support services such as hotels and conference centres, to complementary activities such as catering, leisure and

cultural entertainment, among others. Its strategic importance has been recognized through the growing attention given by destination management organizations as well as its identification as a strategic product for Portuguese tourism in the National Strategic Tourism Plan. Meanwhile, investment is being made to improve the structural and operating conditions of *Palácio de Cristal*, an important infrastructure in the city of Porto which could thus offer possibilities to host bigger events in better conditions, reinforcing the importance to discuss this touristic product in Porto. This article intends to explore the potential of business tourism in the city of Porto, identifying planning and management proposals at this destination area. Using the Delphi technique, the opinions of a group of stakeholders were collected on the identification of proposals and product development measures in this territory. The results suggest that stakeholders have positive perceptions about Porto's potential in the business tourism segment and, as a way of empowering it, recommend a set of strategies for its development, namely: (i) reinforcing the need for investment in a new convention centre suitable for large business events (where *Palácio de Cristal* valuation strategy is applied); (ii) the need for closer collaboration between organizations involved in leisure tourism and the entities that promote and organize the events related to business tourism, (iii) greater involvement of stakeholders (from the public and private sectors) and (iv) better knowledge of the trends of the Business Tourism market. It is considered that the contributions collected may be an added value for the process of strategic planning and promotion of business tourism in Porto.

Keywords: Business Tourism, Delphi Technique; Planning and Destination Management.
