



Executive Symposium for Innovators in Coastal Tourism Development May 15-18, 2013, Los Cabos, Mexico

About the Symposium

The bilingual, three day symposium in Los Cabos, Mexico (with a 4th day for site visits in the area) will bring together 150 innovators currently involved in designing, financing, constructing and operating socially and environmentally sustainable coastal tourism developments, as well as potential adopters – those who are or *should be* interested in learning about innovative models of coastal tourism. Sustainable tourism is no longer simply a development choice; it is an imperative especially in rapidly growing, environmentally and socially fragile coastal areas. By joining CREST and Stanford University in this collaborative effort, participants can play an important role in moving sustainable innovations into the mainstream of tourism development.

CREST hosted the first Innovators Symposium at Stanford University in 2010. Both symposiums are modeled on executive seminars held at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and feature a business-to-business emphasis with CEO and top management level participation. This unique, three-day event (with an optional site visit on May 18) will have a geographic focus on coastal areas in the Americas and the Caribbean. This Symposium will feature a diversified range of events and formats, including keynote talks, round-table discussions, knowledge-exchange workshops, formal and informal networking opportunities, “pitch” presentations of innovative ideas, documentary film presentations, a trade show, and more. It will be an exclusive and intimate event with high quality participants and ample time for informal networking.

Who will attend?

The Symposium brings together an elite audience of developers, designers, operators, and other business executives committed to (or considering) new ‘green’ models of coastal tourism and vacation home development. Gathered for the first time in Mexico, these are the thought leaders who are breaking the mold of cookie-cutter resort development and mass-market cruise ships. Participants will also include representatives from international development organizations and government agencies (including FONATUR, SECTUR and SEMARNAT), plus NGO experts and academics (including faculty from Stanford University’s Center for Global Business, the Center for Latin American Studies, and Woods Institute for the Environment).

The list of confirmed participants continues to grow, and as of December 2012, includes:

- **Keynote Speakers:** **Céline Cousteau**, Ocean Explorer and Founder, CauseCentric Productions; **Sonu Shivdasani**, Founder of Six Senses and Soneva Hotels; **Chris Blackwell**, Founder of Island Records and Island Outpost Resorts; and panelists **Dr. Walter Vergara**, Chief of Sustainable Energy & Climate Change; InterAmerican Development Bank, and **Carlos Hernandez**, CEO, Pellas Development Group; **Faith Taylor**, Senior Vice President, Sustainability & Innovation, Wyndham Worldwide.

- *Media Representatives:* **Jonathan Tourtellot** of National Geographic Traveler and **Dinda Elliott** of Conde Nast Traveler.
- *Tourism Officials:* **Luigi Cabrini** United Nations World Tourism Organization; **Ruben Reachi**, Sec. of Tourism, BCS; **Hector Alfaro**, FONATUR Los Cabos & Loreto, **Jacobo Turquie**, Los Cabos Tourism Director; **Alberto Coppola**, Hotel Association of Los Cabos.

Why Should You Attend?

Throughout the tourism industry, innovators are working on projects in isolation, many times “reinventing the wheel” because they’re unaware of the work of other people in their field. This conference brings together ‘thought-leaders’ and pioneers from across the industry, providing an unparalleled opportunity to discuss and exchange cutting-edge ideas. Attendees include a broad range of innovators and executives, including architects, hoteliers, investors, financiers, consultants, and other business executives committed to (or considering) new ‘green’ models of marine, coastal, and island development. In addition, we will have participation from international development organizations and government agencies, NGOs, and academics, meaning that there is representation from literally every possible sector involved with coastal tourism.

By attending this conference, you will be able to:

- Network and collaborate with the most cutting-edge thinkers and innovators in the industry
- Meet and do business with like-minded entrepreneurs, investors, and financiers
- Engage with key decision-makers in business, government, academia, and international development
- Discover green innovations to streamline your operations and improve your bottom line
- Break the mold of cookie-cutter tourism development and learn sustainable techniques to make your business stand out
- Learn the most sustainable techniques for operating in fragile coastal environments
- Market your innovative products and services to the key demographic that wants to implement them
- Consult with PR executives and marketing experts to communicate your story to a wider audience

What will be discussed?

The symposium will serve as a platform for those on the cutting edge of innovative coastal tourism models to share accomplishments and lessons learned, as well as the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Panels will explore social and environmental innovations from designers, operators and planners at both the destination and resort level, and will also examine issues surrounding particular tourism products, such as all-inclusive resorts, vacation homes, cruise lines, golf courses, marinas, spas, community-based tourism, and marine protected areas.

The Symposium will also explore challenges to the wider adoption of sustainable tourism models and how these barriers can be overcome. Key components of these discussions will be access to capital, as well as market and media trends. Leading PR executives and marketers will share how owners and operators can effectively communicate their sustainability and social responsibility messages and engage with local communities. Leading media and tourism officials will also share insights on current and emerging trends both in Mexico and globally.

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Finally, we will explore the crucial topic of climate change and its implications for coastal tourism development in terms of both mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Why Los Cabos?

A significant contingent of participants at the first symposium at Stanford in 2010 either came from or was working in Mexico. A consensus emerged that Mexico, with its significant and expanding coastal tourism development, would offer an excellent setting in which to host the next event. When selecting the host destination, Symposium organizers focused on coastal tourism destinations that possessed ready access to international flights and that had few if any concerns about security.

Los Cabos is an important biological zone and is currently Mexico's most popular tourism destination. As such, hosting the next Innovators Symposium in Los Cabos gives organizers an opportunity to attract participants from the conventional mass tourism in the area to learn about sustainable alternatives from leading innovators. The Symposium will take place at the Sheraton Hacienda del Mar, which is implementing a number of responsible management practices and actively supporting community purchases and projects.

Official Invitation Committee for the Innovators Symposium

Hector Alafita, GPPA

Hector Alfaro Bejar, FONATUR, Los Cabos

Manuel Ardon, Peninsula Papagayo

Roberto Arjona, Rancho la Puerta

Mike Freed, Passport Resorts

Chris Blackwell, Island Outpost

Carlos Hernandez, Pellas Development Group

Roberto Murray Meza, AGRISAL

Ella Messerli, All Baja Solutions

Pablo Sanchez Navarro, Grupo Questro

Valeriano Suarez, COPARMEX - Mazatlan

Eduardo Villafranca, Responsible Biz Alliance

Alejandro Yberri, Costa Baja Resort & Marina

Robert Zimmer, Zimmer Associates