



***Special Session (SS05) on:***

***Sustainable development of Islands between tradition and digitalisation***

**Organizers:**

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**The aim and scope:**

The purpose of this session will be to explore the challenges and opportunities of the rapid transformation induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the Islands.

We know from research at various scales that digital technologies may lead to economic growth and potentially disruptive innovations with strong spatial footprints and potential benefits for whole regions, even for Islands.

The pandemic and the consequent lockdowns increased our dependency on digital technologies and drastically accelerated digitalisation in various domains, from selling products online to working from home and from creatively designing online services and products to building new business models and digital infrastructure.

The session will analyse the factors that influence the ability of the Islands to react, and pro-act, to digitalisation. The focus will be on the ability of (local) entrepreneurship to reconcile spiritual traditions and the impact of technological innovations according to creative resilient models of sustainable development that allow them to reap the great benefits of a structural transformation of the territories without losing their distinctive and qualifying features.

It will bring together a group of researchers with diverse backgrounds - from economics to geography and from regional development to social data analytics - to present empirical findings and discuss policy responses and their current/potential implications to such accelerated transformation processes in a local context.

Practical case studies will be presented to inspire interaction and seek possible opportunities.

Contributions will be hosted related to studies, projects and proposals on the following topics:

- Tourism, culture and local development;
- Innovation, creativity and local entrepreneurship;
- Globalization, value chains and local production systems;
- Labor, welfare, personal services and social policies;
- Technology development and quality of live;
- Infrastructure, transport and local development;
- Welfare, transition to clean energy, environmental and social sustainability;
- Eco-innovation for sustainable tourism;
- Environmental protection and research, in particular protection and conservation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity;

The digital transition is a cornerstone of the NextGenerationEU, a recovery instrument to help repair the economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. For this reason, it is now more crucial than ever, also for the Islands to steer the political and public debate towards a long-term vision, with innovative and sustainable solutions that can make innovation an engine of development that can enhance their traditions, making them a driving force for the development of their economic systems.

[\*\*SUBMIT ABSTRACT\*\*](#)