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## **FACILITATING TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN A TOURISM REGION**

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CICtourGUNE, the Centre for Cooperative Research in Tourism, based in San Sebastian, Spain ([www.tourgune.org/en](http://www.tourgune.org/en)), is a scientific and technological infrastructure dedicated specifically to the creation and transfer of knowledge excellence in the area of tourism and mobility. CICtourGUNE's activities are aimed primarily at understanding the challenges of the tourism industry and generating the conditions that will provide it with the best possible solutions and new sustainable business models. Our research efforts incorporate three key elements: Intelligent systems in tourism management, advanced mobility services, and visitor comfort en route and at destinations. To achieve our research goals, we participate in a variety of strategic projects involving the configuration and development of future intelligent destinations and future business and service models.

CICtourGUNE's research supports the generation and development of advanced solutions that reinforce the tourism industry. CICtourGUNE also carries out research into technologies that enable companies to offer different, contextualised, exclusive products and services. Design and management of these technologies could for example, be integrated into the hotel of the future. Our most advanced research explores the area of modelling emotions and traveller behaviour, with the aim of integrating augmented reality into real tourism spaces. To meet CICtourGUNE's goals, we work with partners from companies, universities, the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network, destinations and public agencies. Our work is carried out by a highly specialised team of scientists.

One of our goals is to be an international leader in tourism research, creating knowledge excellence and serving as a conduit between the scientific community and the market as well as transforming existing forms of cooperation. For this purpose, we are members of several international scientific networks, cooperate with universities in different countries and are an active member in [IFITT](#) (International Federation for Information Technologies in Travel and Tourism), [TTRA](#) (Travel and Tourism Research Association), ERNEST (European Research Network on Sustainable Tourism), [NECSTouR](#) (Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism) and [EUREKA Tourism](#) (European network for technological innovations in the tourist sector). As a member of the [UNWTO](#) (World Tourism Organization), we spearheaded the creation of INRouTe, [International Network on Regional Economics, Mobility and Tourism](#).

#### EXPLOITATION OF RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER

CICtourGUNE is committed to the exploitation and transfer of the results obtained in its research projects. Thus, technology-based companies play a key role, since they become a fundamental part of the mechanism to achieve the transmission of scientific knowledge into technology production, the generation of highly skilled jobs and the boosting of the economy. However, the creation and/or consolidation of these kinds of companies is a rather complex process. Apart from the coordination problems found with all parties involved, these initiatives imply high risk and uncertainty, which pose serious difficulties to the transformation of technological projects into viable entrepreneurial projects.

CICtourGUNE's Technological and Knowledge Transfer Strategy involves the following:

- Pursue technological transfer and the commercial and economical exploitation of research results.

- Disseminate technological advances to public agents, the industrial network, the scientific community and society in general.
- Strengthen the tourism industry's competitiveness by increasing the amount of services and products and by improving processes.
- Support the creation of new companies, both on the basis of CICtourGUNE's scientific research results and on the basis of knowledge generated by other entities associated with CICtourGUNE.

Such a strategy is faced with serious challenges. In order to accomplish the objectives, CICtourGUNE has to continuously evaluate the outputs of its research projects in terms of applicability to the tourism industry players in the regions. For this purpose, a tight co-operation with the rest of the agents involved is key. This will, in the long run, allow CICtourGUNE to reach an even greater number of companies.

At the same time, an efficient and clear Industrial Property Protection System has to be established. Such a system encompasses:

- A management Plan
- Dissemination and Exploitation of common activities
- The establishment of agreements with third parties
- Intellectual property management and patents.

CICtourGUNE is in the process of establishing such a system. The exploitation and dissemination of research results will be carried out through patents that generate royalties. The process begins by evaluating the exploitation potential of research results, and if these turn out to be interesting to the community, they will be protected. The transfer process will be carried out in a way that guarantees information transparency. This is done to ensure all CICtourGUNE stakeholders equal opportunity to participate in the exploitation process. CICtourGUNE's Board will be responsible for exploitation and transfer activities, and may at times, rely on services provided by expert companies evaluating the results of the research projects, data protection and technological transfer to accomplish these tasks.

STRATEGIC LINES	ACTION PLAN
3.1 Promote business competitiveness by the exploitation and transfer of technological knowledge.	3.1.1 Support the current business fabric by expanding and/or improving the range of products or services. 3.1.2 Support the creation of new technology-based firms 3.1.3 Promote private research projects and technology transfer agreements.
3.2 Define a policy for evaluating research results	3.2.1 Evaluation of research results vis-à-vis their applicability.
3.3 Define a policy for the protection of industrial property.	3.3.1 Draw up a management and exploitation plan for the results from activities developed in the common framework.
3.4 Effectively transfer results mainly to Basque industry.	3.4.1 Define a transfer plan.

CICtourGUNE has been working tightly with companies since its creation now five years ago. An example of that work is the outcome of a spin-off company, named tMocion, dedicated to tourists tracking at destination. However, there are still open questions and future challenges that need to be addressed in the coming years. For example, we need to find a balance between our research and science nature and activity and the work that companies need and demand, which is more focussed on applied developments to meet immediate needs of the market. CICtourGUNE is now ready to face that challenge: after five years of research work, we have the ground on which we can base our technological transfer to companies, while we continue to do basic research oriented to the market.