

EARTH

Experiential Approaches in Responsible Tourism and Hospitality

CALL FOR PAPERS

EARTH 2026 - 2nd Edition

Transformative Experiences and Innovation for Sustainable Food and Tourism

19-20 November 2026 Braşov, Romania Hybrid format

Faculty of Food and Tourism, Transilvania University of Braşov

About EARTH 2026

The way value is created in tourism, food systems and hospitality is undergoing a fundamental shift: from staging experiences to enabling transformations.

Building on the legacy of *The Experience Economy* by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, which positioned experiences as a distinct and dominant economic offering, many industries, including tourism and hospitality, have embraced the paradigm of the experience economy. Today, a new stage is emerging, in which organizations no longer aim solely to stage memorable moments, but to guide individuals through meaningful changes in their lives, behaviors and identities.

Marking the publication of *The Transformation Economy* (2026) by B. Joseph Pine II, the second edition of the EARTH Conference pays tribute to this influential line of thinking and explores its implications for food, tourism and hospitality. EARTH 2026 invites academics, researchers, practitioners and industry leaders to examine the emerging paradigm of transformative experiences and to contribute to shaping its theoretical foundations and practical applications.

Following the first edition, EARTH 2025: Experiences and Innovation for Sustainable Food and Tourism, which focused on designing and innovating sustainable experiences, EARTH 2026 advances the conversation by asking a deeper question: How can food, travel and hospitality become catalysts for positive and lasting change in the lives of individuals, the practices of organizations and the futures of destinations?

In this emerging paradigm, food, tourism and hospitality are increasingly understood not only as sources of enjoyment, but as powerful drivers of behavioral and lifestyle change. They can enhance physical and mental well-being, foster sustainability awareness and cultivate a sense of shared responsibility for the planet. From sustainable gastronomy and regenerative destination management to smart technologies, mobility systems and low-impact infrastructure, this shift is enabled through interdisciplinary approaches that connect people, places and systems.

EARTH 2026 provides a multidisciplinary platform for dialogue at the intersection of food systems, gastronomy, tourism, hospitality, technology, mobility and design. The conference welcomes conceptual, empirical and applied research, as well as case studies and practice-based contributions from academia, industry and public institutions. We particularly encourage work that explores how sustainable practices, digital innovation, behavioral insights and systemic thinking can support more resilient, inclusive and environmentally responsible tourism ecosystems.

By bridging academia and industry, EARTH 2026 aims to inspire forward-looking research and actionable solutions that not only enhance experiences, but also generate meaningful and lasting transformations of individuals, organizations and destinations alike.

Conference Sections

The conference welcomes theoretical, empirical and applied research contributions in the following three main sections. Within each section, the topics of interest include, but are not limited to, those listed below.

1. Sustainable Food Systems, Gastronomy and Culinary Innovation

From local resources to responsible and health-oriented food experiences

- Valorization of local biodiversity and native ingredients in gastronomy
- Innovations in food and beverage processing and product development
- Food safety, quality and circular economy practices in HoReCa
- Nutrition, well-being and sustainable menu design as pathways to behavioral change
- Short food supply chains, local sourcing and emerging technologies in agri-food systems
- Culinary education, food literacy and transformative gastronomic experiences
- Food tourism and gastronomic storytelling rooted in local heritage
- Food policy, urban food environments and responsible consumer choices

2. Transformative Tourism and Hospitality Experiences

Consumer behavior, well-being and sustainable destination value

- Transformative tourism and meaningful travel experiences
- Regenerative tourism and hospitality for people and planet
- Consumer behavior, psychology and behavioral change in sustainable contexts
- Well-being tourism, lifestyle change and mental health through travel and food
- Experience design and co-creation of value in tourism and hospitality
- Destination branding and storytelling for transformative experiences
- Sustainable and regenerative business models and value creation in tourism and hospitality
- Education, communication and interpretation for responsible and mindful travel
- Transformative learning in tourism and hospitality education and training

3. Smart Tourism, Mobility and Sustainable Design

Digital innovation, transport systems and low-impact destinations

- Smart tourism ecosystems, digital platforms and data-driven decision-making
- Artificial intelligence, IoT and immersive technologies (AR/VR) for personalized visitor experiences
- Sustainable design and renovation of tourism and hospitality spaces
- Low-impact and climate-resilient infrastructure for tourism destinations
- Sustainable mobility for tourism: public transport, micro-mobility and shared mobility solutions
- Green transport and alternative fuels in tourism regions
- Accessibility, connectivity and integrated transport networks for visitors
- Planning and governance for smart, inclusive and low-carbon destinations

Keynote Speakers

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Thiago ALLIS – University of São Paulo, Brazil

“Follow the beans: experiential and relational values of food and tourism in the Brazilian Amazonian”

Prof. Dr. Dan-Cristian DABIJA – Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

“The Path from Visual Realism and AI Content Involvement to Technology Adoption in Metaverse-Based Tourism Planning”

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phil JOLLY – Pennsylvania State University, USA

“The People Behind the Experience: Employee Well-Being as a Catalyst for Transformative Hospitality”

Important Dates

All deadlines are set at 23:59 EET.

Milestone	Deadline
Abstract submission	15 October 2026
Notification of abstract acceptance	27 October 2026
Registration fee payment	5 November 2026
Conference dates	19–20 November 2026
Full paper submission	15 December 2026
Final notification of acceptance	15 February 2027

Why Participate?

- **Academic visibility.** Selected papers, based on peer review, will be considered for publication in prestigious indexed journals and dedicated conference volumes (see below).
- **Networking.** Connect with leading academics and industry professionals in tourism, gastronomy and hospitality.
- **Discover Braşov.** A historic city in the heart of Transylvania, surrounded by rich cultural heritage and breathtaking nature.

Publication Opportunities

All accepted and presented papers will be eligible for inclusion in the official Conference Proceedings, published by Transilvania University Press of Braşov (CNCS-accredited, code 81) with ISBN and submitted for international indexing. Approximately fifteen outstanding contributions will be developed into book chapters with a recognized academic publisher. In addition, selected papers may be published in one of the following indexed journals:

- **Discover Sustainability (Springer Nature)** – Special Issue “Marketing Sustainability in the Age of Agentic AI”. Indexed in Scopus, ESCI and DOAJ (CiteScore 2024: 2.6).
- **Sustainability (MDPI)** – Special Issue “Experiences and Innovation for Sustainable Food and Tourism”. Indexed in Web of Science (SCIE/SSCI), Scopus, Inspec, GEOBASE and others.
- **Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov – Series II** (Forestry, Wood Industry, Agricultural Food Engineering) – CNCS Category B+; indexed in Scopus, EBSCO, CAB Direct, ProQuest, Crossref.
- **Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov – Series V** (Economic Sciences) – CNCS Category B+; indexed in EBSCO, DOAJ, CAB Direct, ProQuest, Crossref.

***Please note:** acceptance to the conference does not guarantee acceptance to a journal; standard journal peer review and, where applicable, Article Processing Charges (APCs) apply according to each publisher's policy.*

Submission Guidelines

- **Abstracts (250–300 words)** should clearly state the research question, methodology and expected results, and are uploaded directly in the online registration form.
- **Full papers** should follow the conference template (available on the website), be written in English and not exceed 12 pages; they are subsequently submitted by e-mail to earth@unitbv.ro.
- **Peer review.** All submissions undergo double-blind peer review by at least two members of the Scientific Committee, assessing relevance, originality, significance and clarity.

Registration and abstract submission are completed via the online form: <https://forms.gle/Yb9BcP4JUThQhmnM7>. Full papers are then sent by e-mail to earth@unitbv.ro.

Conference Format and Venue

EARTH 2026 is organized in a hybrid format, offering participants the flexibility to present their work either onsite, in Braşov, or online via a dedicated virtual platform. All accepted papers are scheduled for oral presentations, delivered in person during the on-campus sessions or remotely, in real time, during the online sessions. The official language of the conference is English.

Venue: Faculty of Food and Tourism, Transilvania University of Braşov, Strada Castelului nr. 148, Braşov, Romania.

Participation Fees

Category	Onsite	Online
Standard fee (external participants)	120 EUR	70 EUR
Transilvania University staff (authors)	80 EUR	50 EUR
Students, Master's and PhD candidates	60 EUR	30 EUR

The fee includes – for onsite participants: conference materials, printed certificate, coffee breaks, conference bag, access to all sessions and an optional guided city walk; for online participants: access to all sessions via the digital platform and an e-certificate. All participants receive the digital version of the EARTH 2026 Conference Proceedings.

Payment Details

Payments in RON (participants from Romania): Beneficiary: Transilvania University of Braşov; Fiscal Code: 4317754; IBAN: RO08TREZ13120F330500XXXX; Bank: Trezoreria Municipiului Braşov.

Payments in EUR (international participants): Beneficiary: Transilvania University of Braşov; IBAN: RO23BTRLEURCRT0006359506; Bank: Banca Transilvania, Braşov Branch; SWIFT: BTRLRO22.

IMPORTANT – before proceeding with the transfer. To enable us to issue the invoice, please send the following information to earth@unitbv.ro: institution name and address, tax registration number (Romanian CUI), surname and forename, and the billed amount.

All bank-transfer fees are to be covered by the participant. Payment confirmation should be e-mailed to the same address, mentioning "EARTH 2026 – Participant Name, Institution".

Contact

E-mail: earth@unitbv.ro

WhatsApp (messages only): +40 711 977 653

Conference website: <https://at.unitbv.ro/ro/earth.html?id=569>

Faculty of Food and Tourism, Strada Castelului nr. 148, Braşov, Romania.

We warmly welcome you to Braşov, a vibrant academic and cultural city in the heart of Transylvania, and look forward to your valuable contribution to EARTH 2026!

Conference Chairs

Prof. Dr. Vasile PĂDUREANU

Dean, Faculty of Food and Tourism

Conference Chair

&

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Laura CISMARU

Vice-Dean, Faculty of Food and Tourism

Conference Co-Chair