The tourism and hospitality industry contains a mixture of firms of different sizes and development potential (Thomas, 2014). Although the commanding heights of tourism economies are controlled by the activities of large, vertically integrated and often multinational enterprises, numerically, tourism is dominated by a range of small enterprises (Thomas, 1998). In recent surveys conducted in Australia and the United Kingdom, between 95–101 percent of all tourism enterprises were found to be small independently owned firms, which include guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments, travel agents, ground operators and so on. Until recently, the themes of entrepreneurship and small enterprise development in tourism could be described variously as “terra incognita” for researchers (Page et al., 1999) or “a research lacuna that warrants further examination” (Ioannides, 2003: 43). In the international context many tourism scholars have responded to the challenge of expanding knowledge of the dynamics of small tourism and hospitality farms and of how they articulate with the economy and society as a whole. Indeed, within the past year, it is significant that 3 edited collections have been published of international research that focuses on small firms in tourism (Keller and Bieger, 2004; Thomas, 2004a; Morrison and Thomas 2004). Looking at the research contributions made during the last decade, Thomas (2004b: 1) could conclude that there “has been a flourishing of interest in a variety of issues relating to small businesses in tourism.”
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