

## WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE 2ND UNWTO TOURISM STARTUP COMPETITION IN MADRID

- **Eight companies have received an award in their respective categories**

**Madrid (Spain), January 20, 2020** - The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in association with Turismo de Portugal and Globalia, the leading tourism group in Spain and Latin America, have named the eight winners of the 2nd Tourism Startup Competition. Launched in 2018, this initiative works to identify and reward the new companies that will lead the transformation of the global tourism sector within the framework of innovation and sustainability.

The final event took place in Wakalua, the tourism innovation hub promoted by Globalia in collaboration with UNWTO. This event was held on eve of FITUR, Spain's biggest and most important tourism trade fair and was attended by UNWTO Secretary-General **Zurab Pololikashvili** and the CEO of Globalia, **Javier Hidalgo** as well as representatives from the collaborating companies that will participate in the promotion, investment search and implementation of projects with the winner companies.

Among the stakeholders was **Miguel Arias**, Global Entrepreneurship Director of Telefónica, **Luis Araujo**, President of Tourism of Portugal. Joining them was **Begoña Gomez**, Director of the Africa Center, **Rufino Selva**, adjunct director general of the Society of Thematic Projects of the Valencia Community, **Raquel Rodrigo**, Senior Analyst of Amadeus and **Julie Moorhouse**, responsible for the New Concepts in Intu Costa del Sol.

In the **Deep Tech** category, **rethinking the location and geolocation**, driven by Amadeus, the winner is **Klusterá** (Mexico), which works in the field of digital transformation and human behavior.

Within the **Intelligent Mobility** category, awarded in alliance with **Telefónica**, the winning startup is **Eccocar** (Spain), company that allows vehicles and fleets to be managed more ecologically.

In the **Smart Destinations** category, awarded with the collaboration of the **Digital District of Valencia**, the award went to **Visualfy** (Spain) which aims to help people with hearing loss overcome barriers and enjoy their leisure time.

Within the category of **Disruptive Hospitality**, awarded in partnership with **Intu Costa del Sol**, the award to **Questo** (Romania) which helps create unique experiences in destinations inspired by movies, books or local legends.

In the **Rural Development section, promoted by Globalia**, the winner is **I Like Local** (The Netherlands) which connects tourists local communities in developing countries in order to offer more authentic and personal travel experiences.

**Turismo de Portugal** has awarded the **Innovative Solutions in Tourism award** to **Hijiffy** (Portugal), a startup that centralizes, automates and measures all hotel customer service activities.

The winners of the **Social Innovator's Retreat competition at the IE Africa Center** are **Enjoy Agriculture** (Senegal), a startup that provides experiences for tourists related to agrotourism, and **EBikes4Africa** (Namibia), which offers electric bikes for both local citizens and tourists.

Finally, the **Special Recognition in Sustainability** prize, supported by **UNWTO** and **Globalia** has gone to **Live Electric Tours** (Portugal), which offers tours in 100% electric vehicles.

"Growth and consolidation are usually the biggest challenges at the beginning of any project, and our startup competition has, thanks to the support of UNWTO and our partners, become a benchmark within the sector. We have received proposals from more than 150 countries and in this second edition they come from more mature emerging companies. In fact, 10% of the companies that presented themselves invoiced more than 500,000 euros in 2018," said **Javier Hidalgo**, CEO of Globalia.

**Zurab Pololikashvili** underlined that "innovation offers many solutions to big challenges with of the tourism sector as a global economic leader that is growing faster than the global economy, generating employment and granting opportunities for all". He added that "without the support of Globalia we could not have identified and promoted the potential of these companies, which – no doubt – will be very successful in the future.

**Luís Araújo**, President of Turismo de Portugal, added: "Innovation is a major force for growth and sustainability, providing the ingredients for a long-term success in the tourism sector. The UNWTO Tourism Startup Competition's finalist applications highlight the most innovative solutions to the future of the tourism sector. This provides a great opportunity to establish international contacts and to push innovation to the next level."

In its first two editions, the UNWTO Tourism Startup Competition has received proposals from almost 5,000 startups. This year, the Wakalua innovation hub hosted the winning companies and will follow-up with them in Barrabes.biz, the consultancy specialized on innovation which is also a collaborator as an associate. The Globalia and UNWTO Start-up Competition has become a milestone in the transformation of the tourism sector.

## About the World Tourism Organization

The World Tourism Organization is the United Nations agency responsible for promoting sustainable development through responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As a leading international organization in the field of tourism, it promotes tourism as an engine of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability, and offers leadership and support to the sector to promote knowledge and tourism policies throughout the world.

## About Globalia

Globalia, is the leading tourism group in Spain and Latin America, with an annual turnover close to 4,000 million euros in 2018. With a presence in more than 60 countries and 15,000 employees, Globalia provides services to all sectors of the world of tourism. It comprises a number of independent companies that are leaders in their markets, including Air Europa (airline), Halcón Viajes (travel agencies), Travelplan (tour operator), Be Live (hotel chain) or Groundforce (airport handling).

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