

Private Sector Commitment to the **UNWTO** Global Code of Ethics for Tourism: Guidelines



“To ensure that tourism has lasting positive effects, we need to build a more sustainable sector among all actors. The companies that commit to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism are leading by example in promoting ethical, responsible and sustainable tourism development.”

Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary-General

I. The UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

The **UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism** is a roadmap for responsible and sustainable tourism development endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001.

Its **10 principles**, covering the economic, social, cultural and environmental components of tourism, are intended to help maximize the sector's benefits while minimizing any potentially negative impacts.

While the Code of Ethics is not legally binding, it features a **voluntary implementation** mechanism through the recognition of the role of the **World Committee on Tourism Ethics**. Established in 2004 as an independent and impartial body, stakeholders may refer any matters regarding the Code's interpretation and application to the Committee.

Full-text is available at <http://ethics.unwto.org>.

II. Ethical Principles for the Private Sector

The following principles are most relevant for private sector corporate social responsibility:

- **Article 2: Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment**

Tourism businesses should promote tolerance and gender equality, respecting human rights while combating the exploitation of the most vulnerable groups in society.

- **Article 3: Tourism, a factor of sustainable development**

Tourism practitioners should safeguard the environment and natural heritage, preserve resources, and avoid waste production, ideally by agreeing to limitations on their activities in highly sensitive areas.

- **Article 5: Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities**

Tourism companies should integrate locals into a destination's economic and social fabric, giving priority to local manpower. Studies on the impact of development projects and dialogue with host populations are both essential.

- **Article 6: Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development**

Tourism professionals should provide tourists with objective information on destinations and conditions of travel, demonstrating concern for clients' security, ensuring suitable insurance and assistance systems, and supporting tourists' cultural and spiritual fulfilment.

- **Article 9: Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry**

Tourism enterprises should not exploit their positions or impose socio-cultural models on host communities. They should be involved in local development, avoid the excessive repatriation of profits, and guarantee workers' fundamental rights.

III. Committing to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

The **Private Sector Commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism** represents a public declaration on behalf of a tourism enterprise or association to uphold and integrate the Code's principles in its corporate governance.

Signature is fully complimentary and open to all private sector tourism companies (i.e. hotels, and similar accommodation establishments; airline, cruise and rail companies; tour operators and travel agencies; conventions' centers; Global Distribution Systems and online booking systems) and trade associations directly related to the mentioned tourism companies. Public and semi-public entities, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and tourism consultancies are not eligible for the signing of the Commitment.

By signing the commitment companies pledge to:

- **Observe the principles of the Code**

To adhere to the principles of the Code of Ethics related to sustainable and responsible tourism, human rights—particularly the rights of host communities and workers – and the fight against the exploitation of the most vulnerable groups of the population and for the preservation of natural heritage.

- **Disseminate the Code**

To disseminate and promote the Code to partners, providers, clients and employees throughout the travel and tourism sector.

- **Report on the implementation of the Code in its corporate governance**

To report to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on actions taken to put into practice the principles of the Code by responding to an online questionnaire that is periodically sent to signatories. The reporting of such actions is a mandatory requirement, that must be provided at least once every two years , in order to keep the corresponding entity in the public UNWTO list of signatories, as well as to retain the right to use the special logo of the Commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

IV.. Communicating the Commitments to the Code

1. Public signing ceremony with the presence of UNWTO Secretary-General or the Chairperson of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics and national tourism representatives

2. Promotion of good practises of signatory companies and associations through UNWTO communications, namely:

- Listing in UNWTO's website
- Publication of a biennial report of the implementation
- Invitation to share good practices and examples of implementation of the principles of the Code at international conferences and events

3. Signatories are invited to promote their commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism within their communications namely by using the logo below (terms and conditions on the use **of the logo** will be provided to all signatories).





C/ Poeta Joan Maragall 42, 28003 Madrid
Tel: (34) 91 567 81 00 / Fax: (34) 91 571 37 33
ethics@unwto.org