

WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION AND BASQUE CULINARY CENTRE LAUNCH THE 2ND GASTRONOMY TOURISM START-UP COMPETITION

Madrid (Spain), 10 February 2020. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Basque Culinary Center have joined forces again for the second edition of the Global Gastronomy Tourism Startup Competition.

After the success of the first edition, the competition has returned to identify and celebrate disruptive ideas and innovators who will lead the transformation of the sector as well as those who are making a positive impact in their local communities.

In 2019, over 300 initiatives from 84 countries were submitted. Projects ranged from new technologies, community-based tourism development initiatives, innovation software and startups focused on innovation-driven agricultural sustainability. All of them help contribute to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For this second edition and with the support of the TUI Care Foundation, there will be two prizes. The first category will identify the initiative that is both innovative and has a sustainable social impact. The winning project will receive expert support from Basque Culinary Center (the Culinary Action! initiative) and from UNWTO. The project will be showcased at the 6th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy. As well as receiving help in creating a work plan for the design or implementation of a pilot project, the winner will also have access to the Culinary Action! network, which offers mentoring, monitoring and the opportunity to scale-up the project using the latest digital tools available.

The other category will recognize the most disruptive gastronomy tourism startup overall. The winning company will design a pilot project alongside Basque Culinary Center and implement it with the help of its network. It will also receive economic support to cover the expenses of the acceleration process with Culinary Action!, as well as accommodation and travel, for up to 3.000 euros.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "With this competition we are identifying key companies which will shape the future for food and travel. Gastronomy continues to prove its potential as a vital opportunity to enrich the tourism offer and stimulate economic development in destinations all around the world, especially in rural communities, with the potential to scale on a global level."

Competition co-founder, Basque Culinary Center Director Joxe Mari Aizega added: "This competition allows us to identify and support entrepreneurial talent in gastronomy.

There are entrepreneurs in different parts of the world who are promoting new initiatives that take advantage of the potential of gastronomy and tourism. Likewise, it allows us to provide training and to offer tools to help entrepreneurs to develop projects with the potential to transform and have a positive impact on both companies and destinations, promoting gastronomic tourism as a tool to guarantee the sustainability of the destination."

The call for proposals for the 2nd UNWTO and Basque Culinary Center's Global Gastronomy Tourism Startup Competition has been launched worldwide and will close on 6 April. The finalists of the Startups category and the winners of the Social Innovation Category will be announced on 4 May 2020.

The Startups category winner winning startup will be announced between 1 and 3 June, during the 6th Edition World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism to be held in Flanders, Belgium.

For more information and registration materials, visit <https://www.gastronomytourismventures.org/>

About the UNWTO

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for promoting responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, the UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

About Basque Culinary Center

Basque Culinary Center is a pioneering academic institution worldwide, created by seven of the top Basque chefs along with Mondragon University, and with the involvement of eleven of the most influential chefs in the world.

The main aim of Basque Culinary Center is higher education, research, innovation and promotion of gastronomy and nutrition. Since its creation, in September 2011, we have worked to become the international benchmark in this field and also to promote gastronomy as a lever of social-economic development through the Faculty of Gastronomic Sciences and the Centre for Research and Innovation. We also develop many different promotional activities.

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