

CALLING ON INNOVATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS TO ACCELERATE TOURISM RECOVERY

Madrid, Spain, 25 March 2020 – *In the face of an unprecedented challenge, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), calls on innovators and entrepreneurs to put forward new solutions to help the tourism sector recover from COVID-19.*

With millions of jobs at risk as the pandemic hits tourism harder than any other sector, the United Nations specialized tourism agency has included innovation in its wider response to the pandemic. That response has seen UNWTO work closely alongside WHO to mitigate the impact and **place tourism at the centre of future recovery efforts** and liaise closely with governments and the private sector to boost collaboration and international solidarity.

The “Healing Solutions” challenge is launched in collaboration with WHO, further advancing the united response of the wider United Nations system to COVID-19. This global call for entrepreneurs and innovators asks them to submit **ideas that can help the tourism sector mitigate the impact of the pandemic and kickstart recovery efforts**. In particular, the challenge is aimed at finding ideas that can make a difference right away: for destinations, for businesses and for public health efforts.

Ideas that are ready to implement

Participants should be able to demonstrate how their ideas can help tourism in its response to COVID-19. Ideas must also have been piloted and be **ready to scale-up**, with a business plan in place and the potential to be implemented in several countries.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili explains: “Tourism is the sector that has been hit the hardest by COVID-19. Our response needs to be strong and united. We also need to embrace innovation. I call on all entrepreneurs and innovators with ideas that are developed and ready to be put into action to share them with us. In particular, we want to hear ideas that will help communities recover from this crisis, economically and socially, as well as ideas that can contribute to the public health response.”

The competition is **now live and applications close on 10 April 2020**. The winners of the Healing Solutions for Tourism Challenge will be invited to pitch their ideas to

representatives of more than 150 governments They will also enjoy access to the UNWTO Innovation Network, which includes hundreds of start-ups and leading businesses from across the tourism sector.

More information on the competition and on how to apply can be found at the [Healing Solutions for Tourism Challenge webpage](#).

Useful Links:

[UNWTO Convenes Global Tourism Crisis Committee](#)

[UNWTO: Tourism and COVID-19](#)

[UN Tourism News: Coronavirus Special Edition](#)

[World Health Organization \(WHO\): COVID-19 Advice for the Public](#)