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AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



Sustainable Tourism Solutions for Africa:

UNWTO / AUDA-NEPAD Innovation Design Thinking Workshop

In collaboration with I.E Africa Centre

BACKGROUND

UNWTO strives to promote tourism development that supports, in equal measure, the conservation of biodiversity, the social welfare and the economic security of the host countries and communities. Tourism has grown continuously over the past decades offering opportunities for socio-economic development, job creation and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. This growth also comes with great responsibilities, notably with regards to environmental impacts and economic impact.

The workshop will identify existing approaches that could be applicable in the tourism sector and bring new creative ideas and innovations to the sustainability in tourism.

DESIGN THINKING WORKSHOP

International arrivals to African destinations reached 71 million in 2019 and grew by 4% when compared with the previous year. This trend is expected to continue over the years ahead. The *UNWTO Agenda for Africa – Tourism for Inclusive Growth* which has been endorsed at the 110th Executive Council in Baku, Azerbaijan and its subsequent adoption at the 23rd General Assembly, in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2019 is a blueprint for the future of African tourism. This Roadmap intends to harness the power of tourism in the African Continent for economic growth across all sectors and sustainable development.

It is a fact that poorly planned and managed tourism can negatively impact rural communities and their environment; produce low-level jobs, and put pressure on resident communities. Africa is endowed with a unique flora and fauna, rich cultural heritage, colorful gastronomy and wonderful people with a huge tourism potential that is yet to be fully exploited. The development of the tourism sector in the continent can be the transformative tool for the creation of jobs to tackle the unemployment threat that exists in Africa, especially amongst youth. The goal of tourism planning and management is to help ensure that tourism contributes to development goals by providing jobs and natural resource protection through a vision of improved competitiveness, sustainability, and inclusion.

In 2019, UNWTO joined forces with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and launched the 1st UNWTO-AUDA-NEPAD Tourism Tech Adventure which was held within the framework of the

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10th edition of INVESTOUR¹. While also providing a platform to connect with the global investors, the rationale behind the startup initiative was to support the selected participants with additional training to scale up their projects. The event took place in Madrid and challenged those young African entrepreneurs to develop tourism-related and disruptive innovation that offer a technology-based solution to the traditional challenges faced in the tourism sector.

This Innovation Design Thinking Workshop aims to find solutions which can bolster economic growth while reducing tourism's carbon footprint. This design-thinking workshop will be dedicated to develop thought-provoking approaches, whilst providing the opportunity for participants from across the tourism value chain to learn from the latest ideas, and approaches at a local level, and share their inputs to support the incubation of novel approaches and solutions.

METHODOLOGY

This workshop's methodology will include the eight primary design thinking exercises, which are:

1. Sunflower, Spike, Seed

This is a method for color-coding and sorting observations as "Sunflowers" (things that are positive), "Spike" (things which are negative), and "Seeds" (things that represent future opportunities). Participants will work individually to record their observations on sticky notes of different, corresponding colors (yellow for sunflowers, blue for spikes and green for seeds). This method is used to capture and codify data relevant to the challenge set, using data points previously gathered by the participants and laying the foundation for subsequent exercises. It has the added benefit of allowing participants to visualize trends in the data.

2. Affinity Clustering

A graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity. Participants arrange notes by common characteristics, experiment and re-categorize, and ultimately label clusters to identify important themes and uncover unexpected linkages. Sunflower, Spike, Seed observations from workshop participants (those generated in the previous exercise) will be used to form affinity clusters.

3. "How Might We" Statement Starters

An exercise through which participants generate open-ended questions to instigate generation of ideas (i.e. How Might We...? statements) based on the Affinity Clusters from the previous exercise. "How might we" statements are not meant to be limited, practical, and achievable descriptions of success for real projects. They are meant to be North Stars – ambitious guides to keep further ideation focused on the highest order outcomes and possibilities.

4. Creative Matrix

Following the Statement Starter exercise, participants will be transitioning into the Creative Matrix exercise. The Creative Matrix is a tool to spark new ideas at the intersections of distinct categories. This

¹ <http://www.investour-africa.com/en/home/>



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exercise also marks a turning point in the workshop from generating data and framing the challenges to generating solutions. This exercise encourages participants to rapidly generate ideas that address their “how might we” statements utilizing different enablers such as, for instance: technologies, policies, new and traditional media and partnerships and collaboration. The goal is for each small team to populate with ideas every cell in a poster-size matrix of five columns and five rows. Facilitators will also create a “wild card” category as a catch-all for any ideas that didn’t necessarily fit into one box.

5. Emerging Concepts

Participants return to their groups to debrief the many ideas they generated on their corresponding Creative Matrices. They review all the ideas, identify those that are similar or that could work well together, and start clustering these to form emerging concepts. During this part of the exercise, they removed sticky notes containing the desired ideas from the matrix chart and placed them on concept sheets. By the end, each team proposed two concepts that they wanted to refine, each incorporating several different ideas pulled from the Creative Matrices. By the end of this exercise, the participants had synthesized 180 different ideas into eight concepts

6. Concept Posters

Participants further will refine their concepts by creating posters that articulate critical points, such as key benefits, resources, stakeholders involved, and time frame for execution. This exercise forces participants not only to create a visual “sales pitch” for their idea but also think through how to present it in a straightforward manner.

7. Concept Presentations and Critique

During this exercise, each team will nominate a spokesperson to deliver a 2-minute presentation of their concept poster, following a structure provided by the facilitators. Each presentation was followed by a 3-minute debrief that allowed the audience to ask clarifying questions and provide critique. The audience (i.e. other participants) offered their feedback using sticky notes of different colors to represent Sunflowers, Spikes, and Seeds. Each team will be able to hear some of this feedback from their colleagues, and the rest of the feedback is collected by placing the sticky notes in their corresponding concept posters at the end of each pitch.

8. Debrief Discussion

Facilitators invited the group to discuss action items and explain how the artifacts and outcomes of the workshop will be captured by the facilitators. These discussions included “visual voting” by participants, using sticky note tabs, on projects based on different dimensions of feasibility (political, economic, operational, and technical) and impact (deep and wide)

THE OBJECTIVES

This workshop seeks to generate innovative, achievable proposals to contribute to the sustainable development of tourism within the framework of the SDGs. Transforming tourism for sustainable action requires out-of-the box thinking and determined actions. This workshop aims to find solutions that could contribute effectively to decoupling tourism growth from its carbon footprint, mitigating negative impacts and harnessing the benefits of tourism in a model which is replicable, scalable, impactful and measurable.



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CRITERIA

The 30 Participants of the workshop, who will be accompanied by tourism experts from UNWTO, NEPAD and IE Africa Center, will include:

- Top 5 African Startups from the 2019 UNWTO-AUDA NEPAD TTA;
- Top 5 African Startups from the 2nd UNWTO Global Startup Competition
- Top 20 local youth who will be selected along the following criteria:
 - Young founders who have taken an active role in developing a product, determining specifications, and bringing that product into production, whether it's a physical product or a digital solution.
 - The categories should range from Sustainable Energy, Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Resilience, Environmental and Social Innovation, Water and Waste Management, Innovative Financing, Community Leadership and Design Thinking in Policymaking Processes:
 - A balance between public and private sectors including 6 main stakeholders of the innovation ecosystem (government and public entities, companies, startups, investors, academics, innovation hubs/accelerators and regional destination managers).

Eligible sustainable tourism solutions should target innovation in tourism. Solutions should target policy implementation, new business models and/or technological applications. They can include new approaches or the transfer of proven approaches to new contexts.

Some observers are also welcomed to the workshop, subject to availability of space.

TIMELINE

February: Selection of 30 African entrepreneurs to participate in the workshop

25 March: Design thinking workshop (in collaboration with I.E Africa Centre)

26 March: Presentations of the top solutions (1 per team of 10) and Selection of winning solution

Presentation of local entrepreneurial projects

April: Development of workshop summary report

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