

## “BEYOND TOURISM INNOVATION CHALLENGE”

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) **the tourism sector is one of the hardest-hit by the outbreak of COVID-19**, representing a huge downside risk in the context of a weaker world economy<sup>1</sup>. The Caribbean region is among the most tourism-dependent in the world. Just in The Bahamas, Barbados and Jamaica tourism accounted for between 34 and 48 percent of total output (GDP) in 2019. In Central America, the total contribution of the sector to the GDP was of approximately 13% and of 12% to overall employment, while for Belize alone it represented over 40% and 37%, respectively.

Despite this disruptive outlook, **the tourism sector is in a unique position to recalibrate and emerge from this unprecedented crisis with new models to further advance innovation, forged by strategic partnerships and solid collaboration developed among representatives from all sectors under a “cluster approach”.**

[IDB Lab](#) is supporting the sector’s revitalization through the **“Beyond Tourism Innovation Challenge”** focused on:

**Adoption of innovative technologies:** To ensure consumer protection and confidence, the sector needs to adopt innovations and embrace digital transformation with technologies such as biosecurity measures to protect the traveler, big data for analytics to develop visitor profiles, insights and trends, virtual reality to bring remote locations closer to the traveler, and IoT to bring updates to the industry.

**The tourism workforce of the future:** The industry must invest in up-skilling and reskilling its human capital and develop new talent by supporting entrepreneurship in tourism, with an inclusive approach. Multi-dimensional training geared towards new product development like nature, medical and wellness tourism should be supported.

**Environment sustainability.** Augmented numbers of visitors in fragile destinations require safeguarding biodiversity and natural habitats, as disruptions of ecosystems can exacerbate infectious diseases. Tourism supply chains in the sector must reimagine the tourist offer with measures to conserve energy, water, and transition to circular economy approaches including agricultural and food waste management.

**15 TARGET COUNTRIES:** Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panamá, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Applicants from the [48 members countries of the IDB Group](#) are invited to participate, including innovators, entrepreneurs, destination marketing organizations, businesses, public innovation agencies, academic institutions, research institutions, social enterprises, NGOs, and similar applicants with demonstrated expertise in the tourism sector. *Applicants not located in one of the 15 target countries will only be considered if applying in partnership with a local organization registered in the 15 target countries.*

**AWARDS:** IDB Lab Financing in the form of grants (\$250K-\$500K) and loans (\$500K to \$2.0m), and participation in IDB regional networking events.

### TIMELINE

Digital Launch: June 1, 2020

Submit Proposals: June 1 – July 15, 2020

Final submission deadline: July 15, 2020 (midnight Eastern Time)

Review of Applications (pre-selection, due diligence, final selection): July 16 – August 15, 2020

Expected Announcement of Selected Proposals: September, 2020

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<sup>1</sup> UNWTO. March 2020. Tourism and COVID-19. <https://unwto.org/tourism-covid-19-coronavirus>