

Safe, Responsible and Accessible: UNWTO, ONCE Foundation and ENAT Partner for Tourism for All

Madrid, Spain, 3 August 2020 – *The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is calling on destinations to recognize the needs of travellers with disabilities or specific access requirements as they open up to visitors again. In partnership with the ONCE Foundation of Spain and the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT), the United Nations specialized agency has released new guideline to ensure accessibility and inclusivity as the responsible restart of tourism gets underway.*

According to the newest data from UNWTO, **40% of global destinations have now eased restrictions on travel** introduced in response to COVID-19. Now, with tourism steadily returning, UNWTO has joined disabled people's organizations and organizations from across civil society to design a basic set of recommendations aimed at maintaining the ethos of **"Accessible Tourism for All" in the new reality.**

Accessibility means opportunity

The "Reopening Tourism for Travellers with Disabilities" guide also notes the **opportunities available to destinations** that take steps to accommodate the specific needs of persons with disabilities, those with specific access requirements and seniors. This is particularly relevant now since tourism has been among the hardest hit of all major economic sectors, with businesses big and small at risk.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "Much progress has been made in making tourism more accessible to all. As we guide the responsible restart of tourism, we must make sure that this progress is not rolled back. Instead, it must be stepped up as it will benefit everyone. These Guidelines, produced in collaboration with ONCE Foundation and ENAT show that **simple, thoughtful measures can make a real difference for travellers** – and in return, allow destinations to welcome this wide and diverse demographic as they look to recover from COVID-19."

Guidelines for whole of the sector

The Guidelines are a set of basic recommendations addressed at different stakeholders working across the whole of the tourism value chain. All are aimed at helping stakeholders, including accommodation providers, bars, restaurants and tourism offices, adjust to new health and sanitary demands without reducing accessibility. The recommendations cover four distinct areas:

- **Travel Planning and Protocols:** Including steps to guarantee seamless travel, and for making relevant information available and accessible to all
- **Transportation:** Including the importance of upskilling employees, adjusting protocols for passengers with disabilities/access requirements at airports and stations, as well as the provision and hygienic upkeep of mobility equipment
- **Accommodation, Bars and Restaurants:** Focusing on accessibility to cater for different needs of clients, guaranteeing social distancing, and enhanced hygiene procedures in all tourism-related establishments
- **Tourist Activities:** Including recommendations to help destinations and attractions adapt existing protocols by taking into account accessibility issues related to queuing, health and safety measures, and new venue capacities

Fundación ONCE Vice-President, Alberto Durán, said: “We are making great efforts to help everyone enjoy travel and tourism. It is fundamental that we use this time of change to sensitize all stakeholders to the need to include persons with disabilities and their families in tourism, leaving no one behind. These clients can help businesses stay afloat in these challenging times, representing opportunities for all.

ENAT President, Anna Grazia Laura stated: “These practical guidelines for curbing the spread of COVID-19, with due regard for accessibility and inclusion within tourism, can contribute to global efforts to reassure all visitors, benefitting tourists, businesses and destinations alike.

The full set of recommendations, “Reopening Tourism for Travellers with Disabilities: How to Provide Safety Without Imposing Unnecessary Obstacles” can be downloaded [here](#).

Related Links

[40% of Destinations Have Now Eased Travel Restrictions](#)

[Global Code of Ethics for Tourism](#)

[Fundación ONCE](#)

[European Network for Accessible Tourism \(ENAT\)](#)