Our Vision
Make tourism a driver of rural development and wellbeing
Our Mission

Advance the role of tourism in valuing and safeguarding rural villages along with their associated landscapes, knowledge systems, biological and cultural diversity, local values and activities.

Promote innovative and transformative approaches to the development of tourism in rural destinations that contribute to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Our Objectives

1. Reduce regional inequalities in income and development
2. Fight depopulation
3. Progress gender equality and women’s and youth empowerment
4. Promote rural transformation and strengthen traction capacity
5. Strengthen multi-level-governance, partnerships and the active involvement of communities
6. Improve connectivity, infrastructure, access to finance and investment
7. Advance innovation and digitalization
8. Innovate in product development and value chain integration
9. Promote the relationship between sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems and tourism
10. Advance the conservation of natural and cultural resources
11. Promote sustainable practices for a more efficient use of resources & a reduction of emissions and waste
12. Enhance education and skills
The Best Tourism Villages initiative

1. Best Tourism Villages
2. Upgrade Programme
3. Best Tourism Villages Network
The Best Tourism Villages aims to recognize a village which is an outstanding example of a rural tourism destination with recognized cultural and natural assets, that preserves and promotes community-based values, products and lifestyle and has a clear commitment to sustainability in all its aspects – economic, social and environmental with the fundamental aim of making tourism one of the drivers of positive transformation, rural development and community well-being.
The Upgrade Programme will benefit a number of selected villages among those that do not fully meet the initiative criteria. These villages will be receiving support from UNWTO and Partners in improving elements of the areas identified as gaps in the evaluation process.
The **Network** aims to provide a space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learnings, and opportunities. It will include representatives of the villages awarded the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO, the villages participating in the Upgrade Programme as well as experts, public and private sector partners engaged in the promotion of tourism for rural development. The Network will support the work of UNWTO in identifying good practices, developing guidelines and policy recommendations as well as insights and knowledge.
In line with the UNWTO definition of Rural Tourism, a village must present the following features to be eligible for application:

- Have a low population density and a maximum of 15,000 inhabitants.
- Be located in a landscape with an important presence of traditional activities such as agriculture, forestry, livestock or fishing.
- Share community values and lifestyle.

UNWTO Member States are invited to submit up to a maximum of three applications (villages).
Areas of evaluation

- Cultural and Natural Resources
- Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources
- Economic Sustainability
- Social Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration
- Governance and Prioritization of Tourism
- Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Health, Safety and Security
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of evaluation</th>
<th>Cultural and Natural Resources</th>
<th>Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources</th>
<th>Economic Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>The village has natural and cultural (tangible and intangible) resources recognized at national, regional or international level.</td>
<td>The village is committed to the promotion and conservation of its cultural resources which make it unique and authentic.</td>
<td>The village is committed to promote economic sustainability supporting business development, entrepreneurship and investment.</td>
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Areas of evaluation (II)

Social Sustainability

The village is committed to promote social inclusion and equality.

Environmental Sustainability

The village is committed to environmental sustainability through the promotion and/or dissemination of policies, measures and initiatives that advance the preservation and conservation of its natural resources and minimize the impact of tourism on the environment.

Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration

The tourism in the village is significantly marketed and developed. The village further promotes the enhancement of the tourism value chain and the competitiveness of the destination in areas related to market access, marketing and promotion, innovation, product development and quality.
### Areas of evaluation

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<th>Governance and Prioritization of Tourism</th>
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<td>The village is committed to make tourism a strategic pillar for rural development. It promotes a governance model based on public-private partnerships, cooperation with other government levels and the engagement of the community.</td>
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<th>Infrastructure and Connectivity</th>
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<td>The village has infrastructure to facilitate access and communications that improve the wellbeing of rural communities, business development as well as visitors’ experience.</td>
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<th>Health, Safety and Security</th>
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<td>The village has/is close to health, safety and security systems to safeguard residents and tourists.</td>
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UNWTO
Best Tourism Villages Selection Process

Applications by Member States
Review by UNWTO Secretariat
Evaluation by Advisory Board
Announce @ UNWTO Event
WHAT IS A BEST TOURISM VILLAGE BY UNWTO?
A village committed to a vision of tourism as a tool for positive transformation, inclusive and sustainable development.
A village that promotes and protects its nature and its culture.
A village that values its gastronomy, its crafts and its people
A village that fosters innovation & entrepreneurship
A village that empowers its community
A village that works for the wellbeing of residents and visitors
BEST TOURISM VILLAGES INITIATIVE

https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages