Tourism has been one of the sector’s most affected by COVID-19. The impact has been particularly acute among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSEMs) which are the backbone of the sector and have seen existing challenges in the areas of liquidity and financing, human resources or digitalization accelerated by the pandemic.

Representing around 80% of all businesses in tourism worldwide, and in some G20 economies as much as 98%, MSMEs are vital for the sector’s competitiveness, job creation and transition to a more sustainable model. Supporting SMEs as agents of transformation in tourism will lead the way towards a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable sector. The importance of digitalization for SMEs needs to be accelerated for economic recovery of the tourism sector by supporting SMEs to unleash digital technologies to create jobs and enhance future resilience in the linkages of the tourism value chain post COVID-19.

At the same time, as recovery consolidates workforce challenges have become more evident as the pandemic also accelerated a series of shifts happening in the world of work, adequate new skills, education, and training. Tourism businesses previously faced some challenges filling jobs that were sometimes perceived as being low-wage and low-skilled, with little chance of career advancement or steady employment; with pandemic shutdowns, laid-off employees in the tourism appear to be moving into other sectors, leaving many tourism jobs unfilled. Indeed, the increasing challenges related to the attraction and retention of talent in tourism mean the sector needs to promote value-added jobs, improve job-related conditions, including life-work balance, tackle inequalities and focus on career development especially for women, youth and people in vulnerable situations.

Challenges identified by G20 economies, which relate as well to overall countries, include

For SMEs

- Lack of access to finance
- Lack of access to market intelligence
- Market uncertainty
- The volatility of the working force
- Changing consumer trends and needs
- Low level of innovation
- Need to strengthen sustainability-orientation and developing new sustainable product

For talent development

- Need to review national policies and strategies to ensure adequate human capital in tourism
- Increase level of skills and qualification
- Improve the attractiveness of the tourism sector
- Support labour and skills upgrades through digitization
- Improve business adoption of new technologies and leveraging of new trends and meeting new consumer needs
- Up-skill workers and incentivize employers to hire and retain workers.

Additional information: G20 Bali Guidelines for Strengthening Communities and MSME as Tourism Transformation Agents: A People-centred Recovery.
Programme

10:00 – 10:15  Opening remarks and Call to Action for SMEs
   • H.E. Fatim-Zahra Ammor Minister of Tourism of Morocco
   • Mr Zurab Pololikashivili, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

10:15 – 10:30  Keynote

10:30 – 11:20  Talent - Panel discussion
   Moderation: Sandra Carvao, Director, Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, UNWTO
   • H.E Özgül Özkan Yavuz, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Türkiye
   • Cantal Bakker, CEO, Pikala
   • Carlos Diez de la Lastra, GM, Les Roches Marbella
   • Fabrice Castellorizios, General Manager, Radisson Blu
   • Hamid Bentahar, President of the National Confederation of Tourism (CNT), CEO of the Accor Gestion Maroc group, Senator of the Mediterranean Tourism Foundation
   • Mathew Lambert, Managing Director, Summit (Invictus Education Group)
   • Miguel Sanz, Director General, Tourespaña, Spain

11:20 – 11:25  Enhancing economic opportunities & Decent Work
   • Alette van Leur, Director of the Sectoral Policies Department (SECTOR), International Labour Office (ILO) (video participation)

11:30 – 12:20  SMEs & Digital Futures Panel Discussion
   Moderation and Presentation of the Digital Futures Programme: Ms. Natalia Bayona, Director Innovation, Education Investment, UNWTO
   • Nasser Ali Qaedi, CEO, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibition Authority
   • H.E Siandou Fofana, Minister of Tourism, Cote d’Ivoire
   • Nicola Villa, Executive Vice President, Strategic Growth Global Lead, Government Engagement Mastercard
   • Omar Rhoulami, CSR BDM North Africa, CISCO
   • Manuel Marin, Cofounder, Livall & CEO Livall Europe
   • John Lohr, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Innovation, Hosco
   • Bruno Delmas, CEO, Elloha
   • Imad Barrakad, Chairman and CEO Moroccan Agency for Tourism Development SMIT

12:20 – 12:40  Closing Remarks and Announcement of the Agreement with the kingdom of Morocco: UNWTO Digital Futures Pledge for Moroccan SMEs and Launch of the Moroccan Startup Competition
   • H.E. Fatim-Zahra Ammor, Minister Ministry of Tourism, Kingdom of Morocco
   • H.E. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
   -Closing-