

Sustainable Tourism Observatories are Transforming the Sector

Madrid, Spain, 22 November 2023 – Members of the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO) have met to exchange insights on the importance of governance, participatory approaches and timely data in advancing sustainability in destinations.

Made up of leading destinations, members of the World Tourism Organization's INSTO network are at the forefront of work to conceive and implement sustainable development practices at the ground level. These practices, which focus on inclusivity and making decisions based on evidence, are leading to a positive shift towards tourism development that is both resilient and inclusive.

Data-driven transformation

The meeting showcased the Observatories' efforts in various measurement areas such as local satisfaction levels, destination carrying capacity, and environmental and social aspects of tourism. INSTO members emphasized the challenges they face in monitoring, underscoring the importance of reliable data obtained through partnerships with diverse providers. They also highlighted the selection of relevant indicators tailored to each destination's specific needs, making it easier to compare between destinations.

The INSTO destinations emphasized the importance of timely and evidence-based policy actions that support the ongoing transformation of the tourism sector. Discussions centred around real-world examples and experiences from leading destinations as well as progress in the Measurement of Sustainable Tourism and One Planet initiatives and the efforts related to biodiversity climate action.

New Members welcomed

The INSTO network continues to expand, welcoming four new Observatories during this week's meeting: Gifu Prefecture in Japan, Cali in the Valle de Cauca in Colombia, the Centro de Portugal, and the Atlantic Coast of Ireland. These destinations have demonstrated their work towards sustainable tourism through participatory approaches, evidence generation and transparency - essential requirements for INSTO membership. Additionally, three members have joined since the beginning of 2023: Yucatan and Tlaxcala in Mexico and the Monitoring Centre from the Batanes Islands in the Philippines, bringing the total INSTO membership to 42.

All INSTO members are committed to assessing the impact of tourism in 11 mandatory areas spanning economic, environmental and socio-economic dimensions. This commitment aligns with the new Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) framework UNWTO is developing, which goes beyond broad indicators such as GDP.

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