Twistic and WeavAIR startups win the UN Tourism Hospitality Challenge

The second edition of the UN Tourism Tech Adventures, along with Infecar is focused on Tourism Technologies and Solutions for Hotels and New Business Models

February 20, 2024, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. More than 120 entrepreneurs from nearly 70 countries around the world have presented their projects in the competition for startups focused on technologies and solutions in tourism for hotels and new business models created by UN Tourism and promoted by Infecar. The challenge, which serves to identify entrepreneurs in the sector, has culminated its edition with the election of ten finalists from around the world and two winners, the startups Twistic and WeavAIR.

All of them took part in the UN Tourism Tech Adventures on 19 and 20 February, within the framework of DigiON, the Canary Islands Business Digitalization Show, a meeting in which innovation was the protagonist against the backdrop of the island of Gran Canaria, in the Canary Islands (Spain). The startups, which presented their projects in pitch format, shared the stage with leading industry professionals, including the Social Hub, Amadeus, Kerten Hospitality, the Hague School of Hospitality, Atlantis Tecnología y Sistemas, Minor Hoteles, the TUI Group and Federación de Empresarios de Hostelería y Turismo of the Canary Islands.

Through this challenge, UN Tourism and Infecar aimed to drive a revolution within the tourism sector, with sustainability and innovation as the drivers of change. Therefore, from the outset, the competition has aimed to focus on solutions that help redefine the hotel landscape and identify new business models. All of this in a sector that generated US$1.4 trillion in international tourism revenue last year alone, when there were an estimated 1286 million international tourists.

For Natalia Bayona, Executive Director of UN Tourism: “From a pool of 120 startups from over 70 countries, the competition received technological and AI-driven solutions that are aimed at revolutionizing hotels and forging new sustainable business models. I would like to congratulate the 10 entrepreneurs that were selected as finalists and will be accompanied for further opportunities via our UN Tourism Innovation Network. They are vital within the ever-evolving hospitality sector, redefining the tourism landscape with their disruptive approaches!”

In addition to personalized support for the startups, they have received mentoring from UN Tourism and its partners as well as the possibility to be part of the Innovation Network of the UN specialized agency for the tourism sector. Likewise, given UN Tourism’s commitment to education, the finalists have had the opportunity to benefit from scholarships to study at the
Tourism Online Academy. The platform, which already has more than 25,000 students from over 150 countries, is a leading online learning center to meet the needs of those who work in or want to enter the tourism sector.

**Meet the winning startups**

The winner in the category of Innovations in Digital Hospitality and New Business Models was **Twistic**, a Spanish company that seeks to change the user experience through mobile applications, digital signature or electronic tags. It was joined as finalists by Czech startup **Schulering**, which has created a professional platform that connects hospitality through learning. The American startup **Everhost**, which works to make visitors feel like locals when they arrive at a destination. Also the Emirati **Sparkle Haze** and its commitment to big data and the use of Artificial Intelligence applied to user experience and guest security and the Tunisian startup **Ostel Flow** that offers new generation solutions based on the cloud.

In the Sustainability Impact category, the work of the Canadian company **WeavAIR**, which is dedicated to business intelligence solutions and remote auditing based on satellite networks and IOT, stood out and the finalists were **Senange Eco**, a sustainability consultancy dedicated to helping companies on their way to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; the Dutch company **Hotels for Trees**, which is committed to planting a tree every time a guest decides to skip the daily cleaning of the room; the Spanish company **Effiwaste**, which works to eliminate organic waste from the HORECA channel by measuring via SAAS; and **Purple Elephant** ventures is a venture firm based in Nairobi, Kenya. They design smart travel technology start-ups from scratch with a focus on innovation in sustainable tourism.

**Related links:**

**UNWTO Startup Competition for Tourism Technologies and Solutions in Hotels and New Business Models**