



UNWTO
World Tourism Organization



**BEST
TOURISM
VILLAGES**
by UNWTO

Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO

Terms and Conditions 2022 Edition

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Terms and Conditions

2022 Edition

March 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- 1.2 As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.
- 1.3 Tourism is a lifeline for many rural communities¹ and has a unique capacity to provide new opportunities to generate jobs, promote and protect natural and cultural resources as well as empower women and youth.
- 1.4 The major impact that COVID-19 is having on tourism (in 2020 international tourist arrivals -overnight visitors- plunged by 73% and in 2021 they were still 72% below the pre-pandemic year of 2019)², due to widespread travel restrictions and a massive drop in demand), represents both a challenge and an opportunity to advance the role of the sector in rural communities. Though true that less favoured communities are less prepared to manage the decline of tourism demand, travellers' demand for new experiences around nature, local culture and products, as well as community engagement in the post COVID-19 context, offer immense opportunities for supporting rural communities, both in the short-term as they recover from the impact of COVID-19, and in the long-term to promote sustainable and inclusive growth.
- 1.5 UNWTO designated 2020 the Year of Tourism and Rural Development and, on the occasion of the 2020 World Tourism Day on this same theme it launched the 'Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development – A Guide to Making Tourism an Effective Tool for Rural Development'³ which were approved by the 24th session of the UNWTO General Assembly held on 30 November-3 December 2021 in Madrid, Spain ([A/RES/732\(XXIV\)](#)). These recommendations aim to assist governments as well as the private sector and international community and outline the key steps necessary to fully harness the potential and resilience of tourism to drive inclusive and sustainable social and economic development in rural areas.

¹ World Tourism Day 2020 – UNWTO Tourism and Rural Development Technical Note: <https://www.unwto.org/world-tourism-day-2020/tourism-and-rural-development-technical-note>

² UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, January 2022: https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-01/220118-Barometersmall.pdf?PBIQdr4u_qM0w56.l0NpfGPzylGu6Md

³ World Tourism Organization (2020), *UNWTO Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development – A Guide to Making Tourism an Effective Tool for Rural Development*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422173>.

- 1.6 Also in 2020, under the Saudi Presidency of the G20, UNWTO and the G20 Tourism Working Group developed the ‘AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development Through Tourism’⁴ aimed at promoting tourism as an effective tool of communities’ empowerment and sustainable future.
- 1.7 Following the 2020 UNWTO Year of Tourism for Rural Development, the ‘Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development’ and the AIUla Framework, UNWTO launched in 2021 the pilot project – the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative, which was endorsed by the 24th session of the UNWTO General Assembly held on 30 November-3 December 2022 in Madrid, Spain ([A/RES/732\(XXIV\)](#))⁵. The initiative is aimed at maximizing the role of tourism in:
1. Reducing regional inequalities in income and development
 2. Fighting rural depopulation
 3. Progressing gender equality and women’s and youth empowerment
 4. Promoting rural transformation and strengthen traction capacity
 5. Strengthening multi-level-governance, partnerships and the active involvement of communities (public-private-community collaboration)
 6. Improving connectivity, infrastructure & access to finance and investment
 7. Advancing innovation and digitalization
 8. Innovating in product development and value chain integration
 9. Promoting the relationship between sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems and tourism to preserve biodiversity, agrobiodiversity, cultural heritage and local gastronomy
 10. Advancing the conservation of natural and cultural resources
 11. Promoting sustainable practices for a more efficient use of resources and a reduction of emissions and waste
 12. Enhancing education and skills development

⁴ Presentation of the Alula Framework of Inclusive Community Development through Tourism at the 113th UNWTO Executive Council (https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-01/Alula_EC.pdf?UEASxUHJPgi.pVPFidsEJVVzSCE6wHMF)

⁵ A/RES/732(XXIV) Resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session held on 30 November-3 December 2021 in Madrid, Spain (https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-12/A24_Resolutions_En_8.pdf?ty8QQroHUzrFT0a9F2uytuuzpxXJ4fqD)

2. What is the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Initiative?

- 2.1 With the vision of making tourism a positive force for transformation, rural development and community wellbeing, the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Initiative seeks to 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 (agriculture, forestry, livestock and/or fisheries), including their gastronomy.
- 2.2 The initiative has three main components:
- The **Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO**, which 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 rural and 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 rural development and community well-being.
 - The **Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Upgrade Programme**, which will benefit a number of villages selected among those that do not fully meet the initiative criteria. These villages will receive support from UNWTO and Partners to improve elements of the areas identified as gaps in the evaluation process.
 - The **Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Network**, a space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learnings, and opportunities. The Network will also support the work of UNWTO in identifying good practices, developing guidelines and policy recommendations as well as insights and knowledge.
- 2.3 The Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative aims to recognize those villages which are an outstanding example of rural destination and showcase good practices in line with nine evaluation areas – see point 4. It also aims to support those villages that do not fully meet the criteria to enhance their rural tourism potential through training and access to opportunities for improvement.
- 2.4 Villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO and those selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme will be part of the Network.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 The Call for Applications is open to all UNWTO Member States⁶ (hereinafter referred to as “Member” or “Members”).⁷ Applications are not open for individual application by villages and must always be presented by a Member.
- 3.2 In line with the UNWTO definition of Rural Tourism⁸ approved by the 22nd General Assembly in 2017 (A/RES/684 (XXII)), Members can present candidacies of villages with the following characteristics:
- Low population and a maximum of 15.000 inhabitants (for the purpose of this requisite, the village will need to submit the population census for the latest year available)
 - Be located in a landscape with an important presence of traditional activities such as agriculture, forestry, livestock or fishing; and
 - Share community values and lifestyle.
- 3.3 In order to streamline the evaluation process, a limitation on the total number of candidate villages per country has been set up. Therefore, each Member can submit a maximum of **three** applications per edition.
- 3.4 Members wishing to submit their applications must dully fill in and submit the Online Application Form (available in <http://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/>) by the deadline indicated in each edition. No other form of applications will be considered. Applications that are incomplete or received after the deadline will not be considered.
- 3.5 Whenever a Member needs to be contacted in connection with the evaluation process, the contact information provided by the Member in the application form will be used. UNWTO is not responsible for incomplete or incorrect contact information provided.
- 3.6 The information included in the candidacy is the full responsibility of the Members and must be true. UNWTO shall not be liable for any false, inaccurate, obsolete, incomplete or erroneous data submitted by the candidates. In such a case, the participant shall be automatically excluded from the evaluation process, and also lose the right to the enjoyment of the benefits and shall not be entitled to make any claims against UNWTO.
- 3.7 UNWTO reserves the right not to accept or to remove from the initiative, without prior notice, any candidates who act fraudulently, in an abusive

⁶ Applications related to villages located in a territory that is the subject of a dispute, of sovereignty or other, before the United Nations will not be considered.

⁷ Please refer to the complete list of UNWTO’s Member States at <https://www.unwto.org/member-states>

⁸ World Tourism Organization (2019), *UNWTO Tourism Definitions*, UNWTO, Madrid. P. 34
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420858>

manner, or in a manner contrary to the spirit of the initiative, the principles of the UNWTO or the United Nations or the applicable law, third-party rights and/or good faith. Likewise, any participant or related person whose action may be contrary to the reputation or good name of the UNWTO or the United Nations will be removed.

- 3.8 Each application shall include the contact details of the person responsible for the application at the UNWTO Member State for the purposes of all communications with UNWTO regarding the application(s). This person must be a natural person, of legal age and with legal capacity to enter into a contract, not having been convicted by a final judgment, for intentional crimes, with a penalty of six months or more, insofar as the criminal responsibility has not expired.
- 3.9 The person responsible for the application who, initially or at any point during the initiative, fails to meet any of these requirements, may be excluded, losing any option to receive any service and without the right to claim anything from the UNWTO.
- 3.10 The participating Members shall also commit to actively engage with the villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages and those selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme within the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Network and in the activities pertaining to this initiative (e.g. attending relevant meetings and events, sharing information and good practices and joining training, capacity building and other related activities).
- 3.11 None of the above actions shall entitle any candidate or potential candidate to any right or claim whatsoever for damages, expenses incurred, etc.

4. Areas of evaluation

- 4.1 The applications will be assessed based on the following nine evaluation areas linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Areas of evaluation

- **Cultural and Natural Resources** (SDGs 8, 11, 12, 15)
The village has natural and cultural (tangible and intangible) resources recognized at national/regional or international level.
- **Promotion and Preservation of Cultural Resources** (SDGs 8, 11, 12)
The village is committed to the promotion and conservation of its cultural resources which make it unique and authentic.
- **Economic Sustainability** (SDGs 5, 8, 9, 17)

The village is committed to promote economic sustainability supporting business development, entrepreneurship and investment.

- **Social Sustainability** (SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17)
The village is committed to promote social inclusion and equality.
- **Environmental Sustainability** (SDGs 7, 12, 13, 15, 17)
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 development on the environment.
- **Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration** (SDGs 8, 9, 10, 12)
The tourism in the village has 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.
- **Governance and prioritization of tourism** (SDGs 9, 17)
The village is committed to make tourism a strategic pillar for rural development. It further promotes a governance model based on public-private partnerships, cooperation with other government levels and the engagement of the community in tourism planning and development.
- **Infrastructure and connectivity** (SDGs 9, 17)
The village has infrastructure to facilitate access and communications that improve the wellbeing of rural communities, business development as well as the visitor experience.
- **Health, Safety and Security** (SDG 3)
The village has health, safety and security systems to safeguard residents and tourists.

- 4.2 The candidates will need to submit supporting materials for the information provided in the areas of evaluation to prove compliance (such as, but not limited to, supporting documents, links to websites, images, etc.). As much as possible relevant links are preferred to documents.

5. Evaluation and Selection Process

- 5.1 Applications will be reviewed by the UNWTO Secretariat to verify compliance with eligibility criteria and adequate application process.

- 5.2 Eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent Advisory Board which will assess the information provided for each of the evaluation areas.
- 5.3 The Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO's Advisory Board is a multidisciplinary external body integrated by recognized experts of different areas relevant for tourism and rural development and appointed by the UNWTO Secretary-General for a period of two years. The Board will contribute to ensure the technical standards, impartiality, and transparency of the evaluation process.
- 5.4 The Advisory Board will evaluate all eligible applications and advise the UNWTO Secretary-General on the list of villages to be recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO as well as those proposed to be included in the Upgrade Programme.
- 5.5 The final decision on whether the assessed applications are recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO or are included in Upgrade Programme will lie with the UNWTO Secretary-General, following consultation with the Advisory Board.
- 5.6 To protect the independence of the evaluators, no information on the identity of the members of the Advisory Board is provided until the end of their mandate. Candidate villages and Members are required not to exert any influence or lobby during the evaluation and selection process. Any contact or attempt to contact the members of the Advisory Board will result in immediate dismissal from the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative.

6. Language

- 6.1 English is the working language of the Advisory Board of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative.
- 6.2 The online application form must be submitted in either **English or Spanish only**. Information in any other language will not be considered.
- 6.3 Relevant information on the initiative such as the Terms and Conditions, Guidelines for application and the website of the initiative will be available in the following working languages: English, French and Spanish.

7. Benefits

- 7.1 Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO:
- Villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will receive a diploma and/or plate as recognition.
 - The Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will be allowed to use the initiative

logo and communicate the recognition in all its communication materials and activities in line with the Guidelines on the conditions of use of the logo.

- The Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will become members of the Best Tourism Villages Network.
- Villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will benefit from the visibility and international recognition as an outstanding example of a destination that promotes and conserves its associated landscapes, knowledge systems, biological and cultural diversity, local values and activities (agriculture, forestry, livestock and/or fisheries), including their gastronomy 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 rural development and community well-being.
- UNWTO reserves the right to request any document and/or perform any activity deemed relevant to ensure the village complies with the areas of evaluation after its recognition as a Best Tourism Village.
- No financial compensation will be given in connection with the recognition.

7.2 Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Upgrade Programme

- Villages selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme will receive mentoring from UNWTO and Partners to improve elements of the areas identified as gaps in the evaluation process.
- The Villages in the Upgrade Programme will become members of the Best Tourism Villages Network.

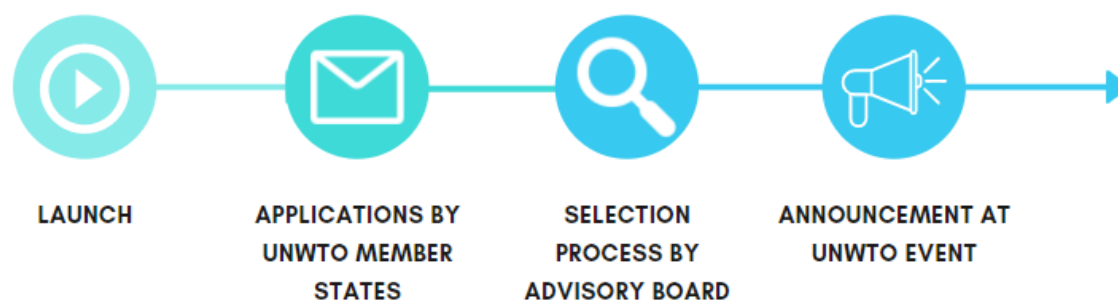
8. Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Network

- 8.1 The Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Network (hereinafter “the Network”) is a space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learnings, and opportunities. It will include representatives of the villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO, the villages participating in the Upgrade Programme (the Network members) as well as partners representing experts as well as public and private sector players engaged in the promotion of tourism for rural development.
- 8.2 The Network will support the work of UNWTO in identifying good practices, developing guidelines and policy recommendations as well as insights and knowledge.
- 8.3 Villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO and those selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme will automatically become members of the Network.
- 8.4 The Network will be enlarged every year with new villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO and those included in the Upgrade Programme in future editions of the initiative.

- 8.5 The Network will be the largest community of villages sharing the vision and mission of the initiative to make tourism a driver of rural development and wellbeing. These villages must be committed to advancing 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.
- 8.6 The main benefits of the Network for its members are:
- Be part of the largest international network on rural tourism
 - Learn and share
 - Get the world to know you
- 8.7 The members of the Network are expected to comply with the following commitments:
- **Reporting:** villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO and villages selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme must report to UNWTO on their activities, initiatives, etc.
 - **Participation:** Members are expected to actively participate in meetings, events and training activities organised within the Network.
 - **Information:** Members are expected to share regularly relevant and up-to-date information related to good practices that can enhance the initiative's role in sharing knowledge.
 - **Advocacy:** Members are expected to plan and act bearing in mind the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO values and to advocate for the fulfilment of the initiative's values among their stakeholders in their destinations.
 - **Update:** Keep the information related to their villages updated and inform the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Secretariat of any change in the contact details of the person representing the village in the Network.
- 8.8 The working language of the Network will be English. However, activities in Spanish and French may also be organized depending on the availability of the partners and resources available.

9. Timeline

- 9.1 Each year UNWTO will publish the timeline for each edition (date of launch and call for applications, deadline for submission of applications, etc.) and will inform the Member States accordingly.



10. Announcement of recognized villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO

- 10.1 The announcement of the villages as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will be done whenever possible on the occasion of an international event organized by UNWTO.
- 10.2 The list of villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO as well as those selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme will also be published on the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO website and through all other UNWTO communication and outreach channels.
- 10.3 If recognized as a Best Tourism Village by UNWTO, the representative from the village and the representative from the Member State may participate physically or online in the corresponding event. The representative of both the village and the Member State shall be responsible for covering any travel and subsistence costs incurred.

11. Terms of use of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Signs (Name and Emblem/Logo)

- 11.1 Villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will be allowed to use its signs in accordance with the Guidelines on the Conditions of Use of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO logo (Annex 1)⁹.
- 11.2 The use of the UNWTO signs (name, emblem, flag or abbreviation) shall be subject to prior written authorization from the Secretary-General and to the

⁹ Annex 1 - Guidelines on the Conditions of Use of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO logo will be made available only for those villages recognised as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO. Only villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO are allowed to use the logo according to the provisions in these Guidelines.

terms and conditions established by UNWTO, as adopted by Resolution 601 (XIX).¹⁰

12. Reporting

- 12.1 If recognized as a Best Tourism Village by UNWTO the village shall provide, every year, a short Report on the main activities carried out by the village in line with the nine areas of evaluation (format to be defined by UNWTO).
- 12.2 UNWTO Secretariat may conduct – directly or through third parties - monitoring actions such as ‘mystery guest’ techniques or other relevant assessment tools, i.e. social media listening, surveys, interviews, etc. to verify the ongoing compliance with the principles of the initiative.
- 12.3 In the event that a village recognized as a Best Tourism Village by UNWTO fails to comply with the principles of this initiative at any time, UNWTO reserves the right to exclude the village from the Network.

13. Intellectual Property and Personal Data Protection

- 13.1 UNWTO owns all intellectual property rights, including title, copyright, trademarks and patent rights in relation to or resulting from the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative.
- 13.2 By submitting their application, candidates expressly grant their consent to the use of their name and initiatives in connection with the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative and the recording and maintenance of related files. If recognized as a Best Tourism Village by UNWTO, candidates authorize UNWTO to upload the project summary to its official websites, which conditions of use shall apply. Selected candidates particularly acknowledge that the information on those websites will be accessible by the public.
- 13.3 Candidates likewise acknowledge that their submitted projects are their own originals and/or they own the necessary right to ownership or property rights thereover. Candidates agree to hold harmless UNWTO from any and all losses, claims, damages, expenses or liabilities which could arise in relation to intellectual property rights or personal data of third parties in relation to the

¹⁰ A/RES/601(XIX) available at <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/unwtogad.2011.1.q143011gl1856q48>

applications submitted.

- 13.4 UNWTO shall not claim any property on the initiatives submitted or any other intellectual property, copyrights or trademarks contained in their application. Candidates do not cede UNWTO intellectual property rights arising as a result of their applications.
- 13.5 Villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO and those villages included in the Upgrade Programme authorize the use by UNWTO of all data and graphic materials provided in the application without time limit, for the purpose of being mentioned on the website or any other media owned by UNWTO and for any actions or events related in any way with UNWTO. UNWTO may likewise store the aforementioned data in its historical archives and media storage of diverse nature linked to the initiative.
- 13.6 Candidates may exercise their rights to access, modify, cancel and oppose the processing of their personal details by sending an email to besttourismvillages@unwto.org indicating which right they wish to exercise and attaching a copy of their passport, national ID card or equivalent documentation.

14. Limitation of Liability and Indemnity

- 14.1 Under no circumstances shall UNWTO be responsible to candidates for any loss, direct, indirect, incidental, special or consequential damage, liability or expense incurred or suffered that is claimed to have resulted from or in connection with the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative. Candidates agree to indemnify and hold harmless UNWTO from and against any and all legal liability, claims, losses, actions, damages and expenses that may occur, directly or indirectly, from or in relation to this initiative, including, without limitation, any infringement of the intellectual property rights or other rights of any third party with respect to the projects they submit.

15. Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions

- 15.1 By submitting their application, candidates acknowledge their acceptance of the entire content of these Terms and Conditions. Failure to accept any of the provisions contained in the present Terms and Conditions shall constitute the non-participation of the candidate in the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative and rejection of the recognition, if applicable.

16. Applicable Law

- 16.1 The present Terms and Conditions shall be interpreted in accordance with the General Principles of International Law to the exclusion of any national law.
- 16.2 Nothing in these Terms and Conditions or in relation to them shall be construed as a waiver of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the UNWTO under national or international law, and/or as submitting UNWTO to any national court jurisdiction.

17. Miscellaneous

- 17.1 UNWTO, at its sole discretion, may adjust these Terms and Conditions at any time and in any way deemed necessary in order to carry out the procedures herein established.

18. Final Considerations

- 18.1 This initiative may be modified, interrupted and/or cancelled if there are justified circumstances that so warrant. Likewise, UNWTO reserves the right not to recognize any village as a Best Tourism Village by UNWTO in the event that no submitted application meets the necessary criteria.

Annex 1 – Guidelines on the Conditions for the Use of the logo Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO

The Guidelines on the Conditions for the Use of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO logo will be made available only for those villages recognised as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO. Only villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO are allowed to use the logo according to the provisions of these Guidelines.

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March 2022



With the vision of making tourism a positive force for transformation, rural development and community wellbeing, the **Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO** initiative seeks to 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.

The **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**, a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism knowhow. Its membership includes 160 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members.