



The Secretary-General

*Member States
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)*

*Ref: IDT/JD/2020
Madrid, 25 March 2020*

Subject: Healing Solutions for Tourism - Innovation Challenge

Dear Member States,

The Covid-19 outbreak has shaken the global economy with an unprecedented corporate and social impact. In this regard, our tourism sector has taken all the necessary actions to address the current crisis by putting people first and promoting a sense of responsibility and collaboration among nations.

Without forgetting the severity of this situation, be this time to remember that tourism is the most democratic and resilient economic sector. International tourism has recovered immediately after declines such as SARS in 2003 and the financial crisis of 2009, moment from which it experienced a decade of continuous growth with benefits both for companies and communities.

This unique strength allows us to think about the fundamental role we are about to perform in the reactivation of normal life. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, we must start creating mitigation and recovery projects through the whole value chain.

In this regard, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) presents the **Healing Solutions - Tourism Challenge** supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), a global call to reach the most innovative startups, entrepreneurs and existing technologies from all over the world with ready-to-implement solutions to mitigate the Covid-19 impacts on our sector and provide support to travellers, businesses and authorities.

Specifically, we are looking for solutions in three specific categories:

- a. **Healing for people:** safety measures, sanitizing methods, early detection, among others for tourism stakeholders (to be used by tourists, tourism employees and corporations).
- b. **Healing for Prosperity:** digital applications for tourism, sharing economy, circular economy, revenue management, demand recovery, investments, among other areas, to be implemented for the whole sector near and long-term future.
- c. **Healing for Destinations:** recovery techniques for destinations such as crisis communication, crisis management, mobility, tourism destinations re-branding, travel confidence recovery, among other related areas.

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Participants will go through a 2-stage process: applications screening and Experts Committee assessment regarding readiness to deliver and adaptability to different countries. Afterwards, top solutions will be released in a **digital booklet** to provide governments with the best providers for tourism recovery; we will carry out a **presentation session** to all of you with my participation as UNWTO Secretary-General from the Wow Room of IE University, the most innovative digital space to share the solutions; and we will connect the startups to the **UNWTO Innovation Network**, with more than 6500 focal points from entrepreneurship, corporations, public institutions, education institutions, incubators and investors.

We encourage you to spread our voice into your country's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in order to receive the maximum amount of applications with disruptive ways to recover. The registration form will be found in <https://www.unwto.org/healing-solutions-tourism-challenge> and the deadline for candidatures will be on Wednesday, 15 April 2020. The announcement of the top startups will be on 20 April and the further steps will be delivered starting from 25 April.

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic is a challenge we must face together. Our response must be calm, consistent and collective. Tourism will once be there to help people and communities recover from this setback.

With the renewed gratitude for our valuable cooperation, please accept, dear Member States, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Should you have any inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Zoritsa Urosevic, Director of the Institutional Relations and Partnerships Department (zurosevic@unwto.org), or Natalia Bayona, Senior Expert on Innovation, Digital Transformation and Investments (nbayona@unwto.org).

Yours sincerely,

Zurab Pololikashvili

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