

FiturNext 2022 Report

# Towards a more accessible tourism



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## Foreword

Once again this year we will be taking part in FITUR, the unmissable tourism event. We are doing so alongside the FiturNext Observatory because we are driven by the same interests: the desire to generate a positive impact on the entire tourism ecosystem. We are the network that enables billions of transactions in the sector, but we are also an active agent within it: we collaborate with industry players to create loyalty programmes, and with governments and cities, helping them to promote more sustainable tourism.

Our philosophy at Mastercard is based on creating a synergy of ideas, information and tools to enable tourism to reach its full potential and to enable people, communities and the planet itself to thrive through best practice. Our commitment to sustainable tourism is based on three pillars: environmental, economic and social.

Our economic and social strategy interweaves both issues and its backbone is inclusion. Our main commitment is based on our promise to bring 1 billion unbanked people into the financial system and 50 million businesses

- and 25 million women entrepreneurs - into the digital economy by 2025. This goal, in particular, is essential to support the sustainable future of the industry, as the tourism ecosystem is largely (85%) made up of small businesses. Moreover, half of them are women-led businesses. Therefore, our priority is to help this group join the financial system and go digital so that they can stimulate their businesses, cope with the pandemic and maximise the opportunities that the tourism sector offers and will offer once it is fully recovered.

For environmental sustainability, we have mobilised consumers - 3 billion people - through our Priceless Planet Coalition initiative, which aims to plant 100 million trees in five years. We have also adopted a strategy that promotes less-travelled places within tourist countries as more sustainable travel options. That is, we promote lesser-known regions - for example, non-capital cities - to reduce the impact of over-tourism in large cities, and address the challenge of sustainability in its three dimensions: social, economic and environmental.

Now more than ever we have the opportunity to “reboot” the sector and foster a more inclusive and sustainable tourism economy. However, the challenges of sustainability cannot be addressed by a single government or a single company, we need joint solutions to address the change of billions of individual actions.

**Paloma Real**  
*General Manager of Mastercard Spain*

## Introduction

The FiturNext Observatory continues to be committed to tourism that allows society to benefit from the positive effects that the industry can generate and, in part, already produces. The good practices analysed in past editions of the observatory make it clear that it is possible to do things differently, harnessing the energy of people who decide to take a trip through the different projects that exist globally.

A trip that, increasingly, has the option of having a purpose that goes beyond getting to know a different place or culture. Pre-pandemic travel figures tell us that if we make every trip a positive action, the result will be that tourism can become the key vehicle for improving the world. And this is something that the planet and society are increasingly demanding.

As discussed in the foreword, the challenges we face as a society and as a sector make it clear that collaboration, today and in the current context, is the essential tool to be able to restart an industry that already in 2019 was demanding far-reaching changes. Those billions of individual actions that close the

previous section must count on the active and combined participation of governments, companies and civil society. The FiturNext Observatory contributes to demonstrating that this multiple collaboration occurs through a multitude of initiatives, and we know that it has an impact on the people and places where these projects operate. That is why the observatory's commitment continues to be replicability, in order to increase the positive impact of each of these practices.

After local economic development and gender equality, **accessibility** is an equally important issue of social justice that could not be left out of FiturNext. This edition reinforces the idea that collaboration between different agents is the driving force behind the creation of an activity. In this case, the different administrations, through regulations, publications and support for the tourism sector, are increasingly enabling the offer to provide an inclusive and quality service to people who until now have had difficulty travelling under equal conditions. Civil society, through the organisations it creates, is helping these administrations and companies to meet

the regulations and even go beyond what is required by law.

As we will see and will emphasise in other points, there is still much to be done, but the steps taken so far cannot be overlooked or underestimated. Among other things, because they deserve to be replicated, like each and every one of the initiatives that make up the FiturNext 2022 edition.

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a brown, ribbed sweater. Their left hand is holding a black vertical pole, and their right hand is holding a small, dark, cylindrical object. The background is blurred, showing a light-colored wall and a dark object.

Part 1

# FiturNext, impact and replicability



## FiturNext 2021 edition overview

In the 2021 edition, more than 400 international initiatives were analysed under the challenge “how tourism can contribute to gender equality”. Of these, twelve finalists were selected, and subsequently, three winning initiatives were awarded: Afrikable, Fundación Codespa and Women in Travel, which will be discussed in the following points.

All these finalist practices showed a **high rate of replicability**, which includes factors such as the state of development of the project, the necessary human and financial resources for another actor to replicate it, the enabling ecosystem, the regulatory conditions for its implementation, the level of documentation of the practice to guide others to replicate it, as well as the rights and degree of openness of such documentation.

In terms of their contribution, through the interviews held with each of the twelve finalists and the information provided, the level of impact on both the tourism sector and on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was analysed, both quantitatively (number of people impacted)

and qualitatively (degree of impact and context in which it is developed). On this occasion, we detail in the FiturNext 2021<sup>1</sup> report the **impact barometer** that was designed ad hoc and used to measure the latter factor. Once again, and in order to obtain another view, the seven members of our advisory board were in charge of evaluating each finalist initiative. This report, which looked more broadly at the replicability of good practice as a driver of positive impact growth, described the adoption and scale for the dissemination of ideas and what makes an initiative truly replicable in the tourism sector.

Despite the circumstances of that edition, participation in FiturNext helped the initiatives to connect with other people and organisations seeking either to replicate their model or to generate some kind of synergy with them. The impact obtained through the different appearances in different media (written press<sup>2</sup>, radio, podcast, blogs...) increased their visibility.



## FiturNext 2021 programme

At Fitur, FiturNext had once again a stand where various experts, organisations, such as the World Tourism Organization, as well as the winning initiatives of FiturNext 2021, were invited to participate. Among the dialogues that took place, it is worth highlighting the following: Begoña Gómez, Director of the Extraordinary Chair of Competitive Social Transformation - Complutense University of Madrid and Director of the Africa Centre talked with Nicola Villa, Executive Vice President of Mastercard, about women, tourism and competitive social transformation.

In a panel moderated by Ángela Rodríguez, from Travindy, Dr Cristina Figueroa and Dr Daniela Moreno explored how to achieve tourism with a gender perspective.

Isabel Benítez, director of communication at Adigital, held a dialogue with some of the leading women in the sector, such as Susana Fernández (Asset), Maribel Rodríguez (WTTC) and Rebeca Ávila (Accor).

There was also space for conversations on women and technology in the tourism industry, training in terms of equality and how technology can drive a new inclusive tourism. Finally, as in the previous edition, the winning



initiatives participated, holding different dialogues about their projects, challenges and next steps.

### Discussions with the public

During the days of the fair, at the FiturNext stand there were different spaces to hold conversations with the public on the following topics:

- How to generate value in your destination or company through gender equality.
- What's Next? Let's talk about the 2022 Challenge.

These meetings served as a networking tool and allowed new connections for the creation of synergies.

## Winning initiatives evolution

Since the last edition (May 2021), two of the three winning initiatives have made significant advances in their models. These advances have allowed them to continue increasing their positive impact in the areas where they operate.

### Fundación Codespa



During these months, the RUTAS programme has focused mainly on 3 aspects:

- Providing training in new biosafety protocols for rural community-based tourism enterprises. Specifically, around 300 projects have obtained their biosecurity certification in order to be able to continue operating with travellers.

- Support communities to adapt their tourism product to the preferences of national travellers; specifically, some health and wellness tourism experiences have been launched, and work is being done to promote the agricultural products of rural communities (e.g. honey, herbal teas, poultry products), which are highly demanded by national tourists.
- Progressively digitalise the pre-sales and tourist booking phase of the communities, through alliances with platforms such as REAL TRAVEL and TOURISTFY

In the same way, they are working along these lines with approximately three hundred initiatives in Peru (Cusco and Ausangate), Bolivia (Salar de Uyuni) and Ecuador (Amazon).

### Women in Travel



Women in Travel cic has continued to generate impact in the tourism industry in 2021 in the following way:

- Implementation of two new tourism training projects, whose beneficiaries are people in vulnerable situations who are in the fourth quarter of 2021 returning to employment.
- Launch of the first industry-wide Male Alliance Network<sup>3</sup>, where senior leaders join forces to support the advancement of women and mentor emerging female talent.
- Publication of the first UK-focused research on travellers of colour, helping the industry understand the opportunity to diversify its travel audiences and attract a previously overlooked profile of travellers with growing purchasing power<sup>4</sup>.
- Women in Travel founder Alessandra Alonso also won her second individual award through the national [UK] Forward Ladies<sup>5</sup> organisation in the social enterprise category.



## Replicability in the tourism sector

The FiturNext 2020 report<sup>6</sup> defined **replicability** within the tourism industry as the provision of documentation, whether written or audiovisual, relating to a project or part of a project that contains sufficient information for another interested actor to be able to implement it. It was also mentioned that this documentation should include the lessons learned, successes and mistakes made, as well as the solutions found, and that it can be made available to other agents with or without conditions, as decided by the promoter.

To understand replicability, it is essential to explain one of its key concepts: **open models**. Open models are those in which the promoter of an initiative shares a part of the value generated - for example documentation or other forms of knowledge - while keeping another part for himself. These models are designed to generate, through adoption by third parties, a much greater impact than could be achieved with their own resources and capabilities. By multiplying the value generated, it is sufficient to capture a part of it to maintain and develop the promoting organisation.

Replicability has a multiplier effect, as it allows new projects with new solutions to be generated from an existing idea. If these solutions are shared openly for others, they in turn generate more projects and/or improve existing ones. Replicating an idea makes it stronger and more resilient to change. These projects are also nurtured by the contribution of the community built around an initiative.

More than 60 years after the invention of the three-point seat belt, it continues to save lives. On the one hand, Volvo's case is closely linked to FiturNext 2022, as this safety system prevents many accidents from ending in some kind of disability as it is the first line of defense and the most important safety system in a vehicle<sup>7</sup>. According to estimates, the three-point seat belt has saved the lives of more than one million people and reduced the severity of injuries for millions more. On the other hand, also in terms of replicability it is a remarkable case, as Volvo released the patent because of the importance of this development. In other words, because it was so significant, they could not fail to share it, so that any other manufacturer could freely install the three-point seat belts<sup>8</sup>, a system that is still in place today.



Another recent and very appropriate example, given the context in which we still find ourselves, and which shows the diversity of existing options in terms of replicability, is Pfizer and its patent for the Covid-19 pill. Last November, the drugmaker announced an agreement with The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP)<sup>9</sup> to license its patent for the Covid-19 pill in developing countries so that it can be produced in those regions as a generic drug. The agreement will allow coverage of up to approximately 53% of the world's population. Pfizer will not receive royalties on sales in low-income countries and will waive those in all countries covered by the agreement for as long as we continue in the present situation, thus reducing costs and making the drug more affordable in economic terms.

Again, as an alternative to the purpose of the patent which, as described by the Spanish Patent and Trademark Organisation (SPTO<sup>10</sup>), is a title that recognises the right to exclusively exploit the patented invention, preventing others from making, selling or using it without the owner's consent, it is noted that making the patent available in certain countries helps to save more lives.

If we take into account the weight that both vaccines and these pills have in the reactivation

of tourism, we find ourselves with an indirect case in which replicability, or the opening up of business models, makes it possible to increase the positive impact of an activity. In this case, both on people's health and on the opening of destinations.

In both examples, it can be seen that when people's lives are at stake, replicability and the opening of models is the most interesting option to increase the positive impact.

As mentioned at the beginning of this point, the previous reports have developed replicability



mainly from the perspective of practices. Taking advantage of the challenge of the current issue on how tourism can make society more accessible, and in order to widen the options regarding replicability, it is interesting to look at this factor from the point of view of regulations. In this respect, from the existing body of documentation on accessibility and accessible tourism, we have the European Directive 2019/882 on accessibility requirements for products and services<sup>11</sup>, the ISO Standard "Accessible tourism for all. Requirements and recommendations" on Tourism and related services<sup>12</sup>, the development of which has been led by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), ONCE Foundation and the Spanish Association for Standardisation (UNE). We also have various manuals, such as the guide "Tourism for all", from the Catalan Tourism Agency.

All these documents and regulations are focused on creating an end-to-end accessible society and tourism. The documentation is available to the different agents for the adaptation of their products and services. Regarding the European Directive, it is a legislative act that establishes objectives that all EU countries must meet, with each country drawing up its own laws on how to achieve these objectives<sup>13</sup>. In the second case,

the ISO Standard is a technical specification of repetitive or continuous application, compliance with which is not mandatory. Finally, the “Tourism for All” guide makes it easier for companies to comply with the regulations and thus offer a quality service to the demand.

**It is worth recalling the factors that enable or facilitate replicability within the tourism sector. The FiturNext 2021 report stated that the following are used:**

### Proof of value:

The more this impact can be demonstrated and measured, the more likely it is that the initiative will be replicated because of its demonstrated value.

### Understandability:

If it is practical, it needs to be simple to use. The language used and the simplicity of the initiative itself are key.

### Communication channels:

Use the appropriate channels according to the target audience.

### Level of Accessibility:

The more open and accessible the resources needed to implement the initiatives are, the

more replicable the initiative will be.

### Knowledge transfer:

Related to the transfer from one context to another, the documentation and the degree of openness, we have the following elements:

- **Toolkit:** The necessary tools that are provided to fulfil each of the stages.
- **Community:** From local communities of volunteers to enable a given initiative, to more formal international organisations and networks of institutional actors.
- **Community champions:** Key actors emerging from the community who attract and train other actors in their own area.

In relation to this, and taking into account the lessons learned from this edition, we can expand on the factors that enable replicability and its impact:

- **Documentation:** In this year’s edition we have found as a novelty two levels in some of the initiatives: for example, a first level issuing different regulations and guides and a second level composed of the receiving companies that make up the offer in these regions.





- **Transfer:** Making this documentation openly available will constitute the transfer of knowledge between the administration and the administered, so that the latter can comply with what is required of them in terms of accessibility.
- **Standardisation:** The first result is, on the one hand, a more homogeneous offer for a demand in need of information. In this case, this homogenisation of inclusive services manages to reduce one of the main existing barriers in terms of accessible tourism: access to reliable and simple information. The second result is an offer with greater legal certainty when it comes to complying with accessibility regulations and which, in the event of generating synergies with other organisations, can reduce its volume costs.



As we will see in the following points, one of the keys to accessible tourism is that the accessibility value chain is not broken at any of its links. The fact that there are different regulations at different legislative levels makes it easier to comply with this fact and to ensure that a trip is accessible from end to end. Currently, in the absence of global regulations, this chain is broken in many destinations. In order to be able to replicate an initiative, regulations are needed to generate the desirable value chain of accessible tourism, because no matter how accessible a hotel is, if the rest of the destination, or even transport, is not accessible, the experience of the user with some kind of special need will be much poorer. This is why there are some practices that can be replicated in some contexts and not in others. For example, thanks to the European Directive, what exists in Spain is more easily replicable in Italy thanks to the homogenisation brought about by this legislative act.



## Part 2

# How can tourism contribute to a more accessible society?

## Research on the FiturNext 2022 Challenge

According to the United Nations<sup>14</sup>, about 10% of the world's population, or 650 million people, live with a disability. This makes them the largest minority in the world. Also, as the World Health Organisation (WHO) reports, the number is increasing due to population growth, advances in medicine and the ageing process. Related to the latter population group, in countries where life expectancy is over seventy years, on average about 8 years or 11.5% of an individual's life is spent with disabilities.

Linked to FiturNext's previous challenge, focusing on gender equality, in most OECD countries women are reported to have a higher incidence of disabilities than men and it is generally recognised that those with a disability experience multiple disadvantages, being subject to exclusion due to their gender and disability.

With regard to the tourism sector, in December 2020 the World Tourism Organisation<sup>15</sup> identified accessibility as a paradigm shift for tourism destinations in order to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

**This is why the FiturNext 2022 edition has chosen the challenge of:**

**How can tourism contribute to a more accessible society?**





## What are we talking about when we say accessibility?

As explained by PREDIF, the State Representative Platform of People with Physical Disabilities, “a tourist destination will be accessible when the set of environments, services and products provided in the tourist offer allow all people to access, use and enjoy them in a normalised, autonomous and safe way”. And this must be the case for both visitors and residents, not forgetting those working in the tourism sector who suffer from some kind of disability.

In the same way, accessible tourism is “that which deals with the problem of the physical, psychological and sensory barriers that still exist today when it comes to tourism for people who, in some way, have difficulty moving around or communicating, factors that compromise the integration and participation of these consumers” (Rovira-Beleta, 2006)<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, according to the UNWTO<sup>17</sup>, for a tourist destination to be classified as accessible, it must include all the facilities and services that make up the tourist offer (travel agencies, information offices, accommodation, means of transport, stations, ports, airports, restaurants, etc.).



With regard to this value chain of accessible tourism, it should be noted that if just one of the links in the chain breaks, the whole chain will fail. If one of the stages of the trip is not accessible, the trip will be compromised and, in any case, it will not be pleasant and will worsen the tourist's experience. This chain, as explained by the UNWTO, would include the following five pillars:

- Planning and information
- Transport
- Accessibility to the environment
- Accessibility to common spaces
- Accessibility to specific spaces

In terms of demand<sup>18</sup>, in Spain there are almost four million people with some kind of disability, representing around 9% of the population. Of these people, more than 65% have mobility problems, more than 27% have a hearing disability, around 25% have a visual disability, about 19% have a disability related to communication and, finally, almost 17% have learning disabilities.

On the other hand, in the European Union there are more than 80 million people with disabilities, which represents 15% of the population<sup>19</sup>. In addition, we have just over 9% of tourist facilities and services with some level of accessibility. The rest are not prepared to cater for this group of people. A group of people to which, sooner or later, we may all belong, whether temporarily, permanently, or simply because of our age.

## The silver economy in terms of accessibility

To this must be added the high degree of ageing of the population, which in Spain today represents 19.3% of people over sixty-five years of age. The United Nations estimates that the number of people aged 80 and over will triple, from one hundred and forty-three million in 2019 to four hundred and twenty-six million in 2050. This segment (referred to in some quarters as the “silver economy”) has a higher income than younger segments and represents - in addition to the right to travel comfortably and safely - an opportunity for the tourism industry.

Apart from the data on the needs of this group, and as mentioned above through the reflection of the UNWTO, it is also necessary to put on the table data on the positive economic impact of increasing accessibility management in tourism businesses, especially in the current context. In this way, instead of seeing it as an expense, it should be seen as what it is: an investment. Not only in terms of social justice, which also has a direct impact on the quality of life of residents, but also on the accounts of tourism-related businesses.

This group reduces one of the major problems

of tourism, especially in sun and beach destinations: seasonality. In the European Union, people with accessibility needs made an average of 6.7 trips per year in 2013 and in Spain, 7 trips in 2015. In other words, instead of concentrating their holidays in high season months, they diversify their getaways. They are multi-customers, as 96% of travellers with accessibility needs travel accompanied. In addition, they spend approximately 28% more than other tourists to ensure accessibility conditions. Finally, they repeat when they find an accessible destination, i.e. they are more







loyal customers than other tourists. And now, thanks to platforms specialised in this type of travellers, such as some of the initiatives we will see in this report, they also recommend places and services that offer a more comfortable way to do the activity<sup>21</sup>.

## Who makes accessible tourism possible?

During the previous research of the challenge and later with the analysis, interviews and selection of initiatives, different roles within society with respect to accessible tourism have been detected:

### The Public Administration

Depending on the competences, the Public Administration would have the role of:

- Promote a regulation that allows for a minimally accessible offer and that publishes the necessary documentation to facilitate compliance;
- Promote the cohesion and inspection of the tourism system in terms of accessibility in order to have as homogeneous an offer as possible;
- The dissemination of existing accessible resources in the destination, in an adapted manner, so that the demand can find the

information in a simple way;

- The updating of this content.

An example of this role are the actions promoted by the Tourism Directorate of the Valencian Community and the Catalan Tourism Agency.

### The role of private initiative

In addition to the tourist offer, there are organisations, such as PREDIF and COCEMFE, that promote accessibility and help, thanks to their specialisation, public administrations to create content that promotes a more accessible offer. They also carry out auditing and consultancy actions.

### The role of technology

Thanks to technology, there are already systems that help to eliminate barriers of almost any kind: visual (accessible digital tourist viewpoints<sup>22</sup>); auditory (devices based on artificial intelligence that send messages with colours and vibrations when a sound<sup>23</sup> is perceived); or digital platforms that bring information on accessibility closer to demand<sup>24</sup>.

### The role of citizenship

With and without technology, people can help others who, because of their circumstances,

need it. From gestures as simple as giving up your seat on public transport, to participating in sophisticated systems such as Bemyeyes<sup>25</sup>, where a community of more than three million people offer their time and eyes so that others can see the environment they are in thanks to the camera on their mobile phone and a connection with one of the volunteers.

### Other reflections on accessible tourism

We are at a time when tourism is being discussed as a basic right. Our rhythms of life explain this fact. New and cheaper ways of travelling have democratised access to travel and made it affordable for almost everyone. Even so, and as we have seen through the different data, there are still groups that have greater difficulties in making their leisure time available and enjoying it in the way they choose. If we are talking about democratising travel, this research indicates that we are still a long way from achieving this.

Undoubtedly, the new forms of tourism must also take into account people with different types of disabilities in order to create inclusive tourism with equity in their enjoyment. The offer will have to be adapted in what represents a further advance in our society thanks to the drive of a demand that is increasingly

connected and aware of its rights.

In Spain, the ONCE Foundation for Cooperation and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities has been operating since 1988 as an instrument of cooperation and solidarity of blind people in Spain towards other groups of people with disabilities to improve their living conditions. Through their actions, they contribute to making the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination effective.

Ilunion<sup>26</sup> is a business project included within this Foundation, whose ultimate goal is to generate quality employment for people with disabilities. To this end, among other business projects, they have the Ilunion hotel chain, the only chain in the world that is 100% certified in universal<sup>27</sup> accessibility in its twenty-eight hotels. This chain is committed to the employment integration of people with disabilities and accessible tourism, which is why more than 40% of its employees have a disability.





## Accessibility impact barometer

In the FiturNext 2021 edition, a new system was developed to measure the impact, in addition to the replicability barometer, in order to evaluate the contribution to the challenge in terms of equality. In this edition, a barometer has been designed focused on making an assessment in terms of accessibility. Among other factors, it measures the number of people benefited by the actions of the initiative, the impact on the tourism offer, the different disabilities addressed and all this taking into account especially the context in order to compare figures.

In a cross-cutting manner, the creation of a community between the people benefited and, where appropriate, the agents that make up the tourism sector of the offer is analysed; participation in the accessibility value chain (interoperability), both directly and indirectly; whether the initiative focuses on groups in a situation of special vulnerability; and finally, whether employment is generated for people with some type of disability.



## FiturNext 2022 Challenge: accessibility and tourism

For all of the above reasons, in this edition, which proposes the challenge of **how tourism can contribute to a more accessible society**, different aspects have been taken into account and classified as follows:

- New technologies at the service of accessible tourism
- Accessible tourism services and complementary offers
- Management and promotion of accessibility in tourism

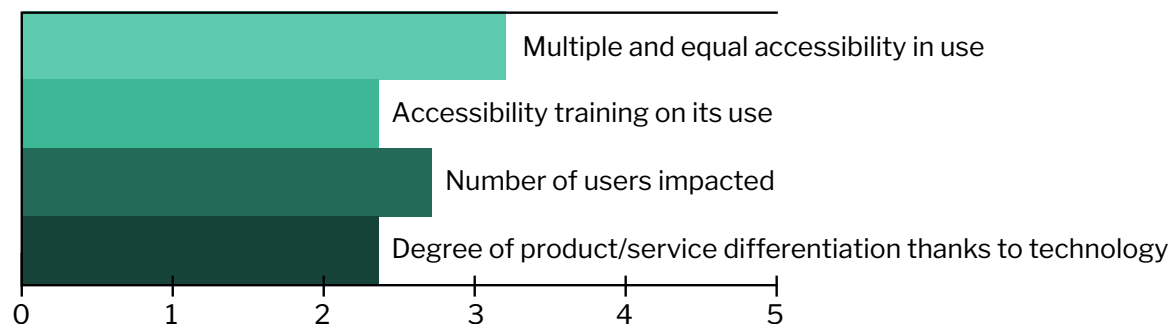
It should be highlighted that these aspects at the same time constitute the three categories of this call, with their corresponding indicators used to assess the impact.

### Accessibility categories and indicators to measure impact

For this challenge, different accessibility indicators have been defined for each category:

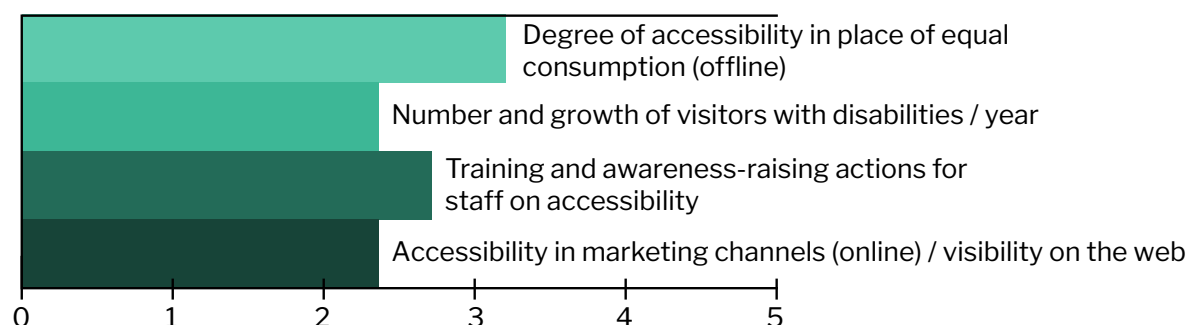
Category:

#### New technologies at the service of accessible tourism



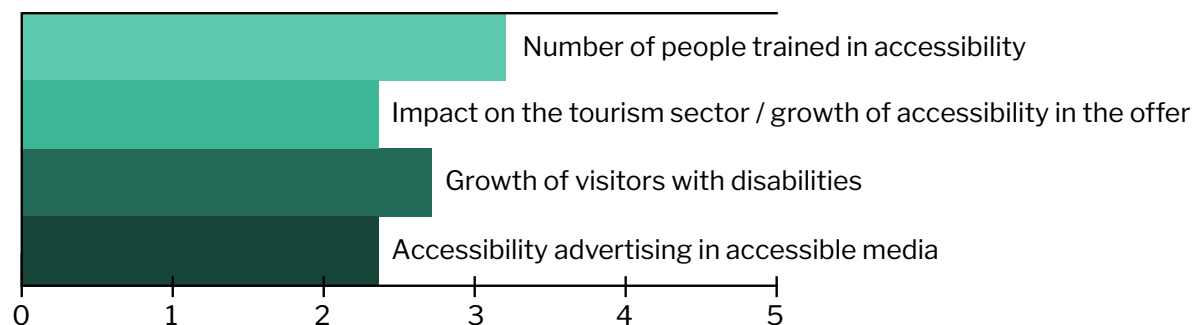
Category:

#### Accessible tourism services and complementary offers



Category:

#### Management and promotion of accessibility in tourism





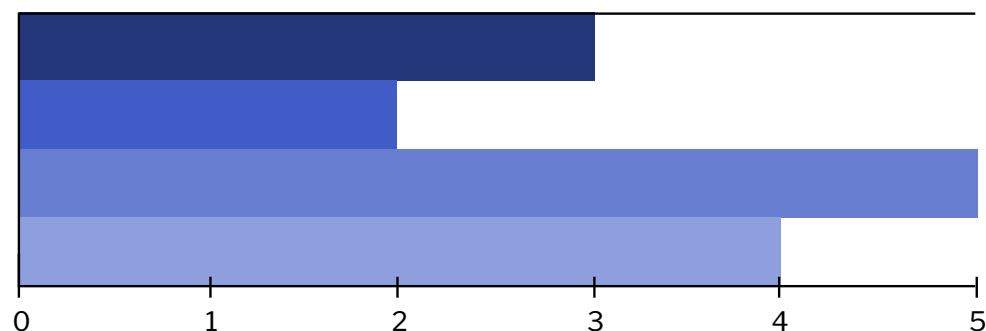
## Indicadores transversales

As in the previous edition, a number of common indicators have been developed, grouped as follows with elements from the challenges of past editions, so that each edition is cumulative in terms of the issues it addresses.

After the first filter of the **replicability barometer**, where the replicability potential of the initiatives is analysed by means of a questionnaire filled in by the initiatives, which in turn serves as an inscription in the selection process, at least one personal interview is held with the person in charge, where the replicability indicators are reviewed and the impact indicators mentioned above are used. These indicators are the ones used as the basis of the impact barometer to analyse the degree of contribution of the initiative to the challenge. After this second filter, twelve initiatives are selected and submitted in files to the Advisory Board, which re-evaluates the initiatives. Based on both evaluations, three winning projects are selected, one per category, which are listed in the following section of this report.

### Transversal

*Impact in transversal factors of the challenge*



### Community

Creation of a community of people with accessibility needs or of the tourism offer.

### Employment

Job creation for people with special needs and an accessible workplace.

### Interoperability

Generation and/or participation in the tourism accessibility system (accessible tourism value chain or interoperability).

### Vulnerability

Focus on particularly vulnerable people within accessibility (most disadvantaged sectors within accessibility, e.g. depopulation, economic capacity, gender).

# Winning and finalist initiatives



Category 1

# New technologies at the service of accessible tourism

Winner: Category 1

# TUR4all



**Type of organisation promoting the project:** Non-profit organisation

**Operating location:** Spain and other countries

**Aim:** To improve the quality of life of people with disabilities by promoting and informing about tourist accessibility.

**Activity:** It is an initiative of PREDIF (Plataforma Representativa Estatal de Personas con Discapacidad Física), carried out with the support of Fundación Vodafone España, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism and ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism). TUR4all is an accessible digital platform that serves as an information and promotion tool for the end user (any type of disability and other special needs) covering almost the entire value chain. For the tourism sector, it serves to promote itself as an accessible tourism resource. It contains information on accessibility conditions of tourist establishments and resources for anyone who needs it. In addition to the resources added by PREDIF technicians (the driving force), from 2017 the platform became collaborative, so users can create and publish content. Users can also rate and comment on each establishment. The initiative has also been replicated in Portugal and is currently in talks with other countries.

**Results:** They have 4,642 accessible tourist resources. In terms of visits, 190,085 have been received in the last year, of which 57,928 are unique visits. There are 1,399 registered users, who can upload information and increase the database of accessible facilities and resources.



## Finalist: Category 1



### On Wheels app

**Type of organisation providing the project:**  
Non-profit association

**Operating location:** Belgium and other countries

**Aim:** To provide freedom of choice through information for wheelchair users when visiting any place.

**Activity:** They have a free app and collect information on accessible resources. Users can upload information about locations, create new ones, add images and correct information. On Wheels App checks that the information is accurate. Other activities that are part of their business model include: awareness raising and team building activities with companies, where,

through wheelchair experiences, participants can learn about accessibility needs first-hand; free actions with schools and universities to raise disability awareness among students; and work with local public administrations to improve cities in terms of inclusion.

**Results:** They have carried out team building actions with 100 people. They have 35,000 mapped locations in five hundred and eight cities and in total the app has been downloaded by 8,000 users.





## Category 2

# Accessible tourism services and complementary offers



Winner: Category 2

# Because We Care (Albastar)



**Type of promoter:** Limited Company

**Operating location:** Italy / Spain / France

**Objective:** To make it easier to fly without barriers. To all people with any kind of disability.

**Activity:** In addition to scheduled flights, this airline specialises in pilgrimage routes around Europe and works with tour operators who are experts in accessibility. Thanks to them, they have an offer of flights adapted to any person, regardless of their disability, through tours to key destinations such as places of pilgrimage. Their cabin staff (including some pilots) receive training at the Toledo Hospital, passengers are provided with all the adapted content (sign language in different languages, Braille...), and they are allowed to travel with guide dogs or companion dogs, with medical beds in the cabin and oxygen cylinders.

**Results:** The initiative has enabled people who had difficulties travelling on this means of transport to do so in comfort and dignity. Thanks to these routes, the duration of journeys to pilgrimage sites, which used to take up to 10 hours, has been reduced. For example, in Lourdes, from 2016 to the present day, they have transported around 15,000 passengers in wheelchairs. In addition, 90% of crew members are trained in accessibility.



## Finalist: Category 2



### Sentir el Alto Tajo

**Type of promoter:** Self-employed women

**Location where it operates:** Peralejos de las Truchas, Spain

**Aim:** To enable people with some kind of disability to access the natural environment under equal conditions.

**Activity:** Their core service is ecotourism and they carry out activities such as interpretative trekking, nature workshops and mountain routes. They organise walks for up to 10 people without disabilities and 6 people with some kind of disability. They cater for all types of disabilities: mobility, visual, intellectual and hearing. They work with specialised monitors and have agreements with minimally accessible accommodation. They also organise the trip

from end to end to make it accessible, including information and budget, visiting card in Braille, transport and workshops given by artisans trained by them in accessibility.

**Results:** Almost three hundred people have enjoyed these services and 95% of the disabled users repeat at different times of the year, which helps to make the trip less seasonal. Year after year, this town of eighty residents receives more visitors thanks to the project. Among other results, the initiative promotes specialised and continuous training in accessibility by the team and the monitors with whom they collaborate and the creation of accessible multi-day packages.

## Finalist: Category 2



### Can Morei

**Type of promoter:** Limited Company

**Location where it operates:** Comarca de L'anoia, Spain

**Aim:** To offer a quality, peaceful and accessible tourist experience, based on its adapted rural accommodation.

**Activity:** Of the 8 rooms offered, 6 are accessible, especially for people with reduced mobility. In general, all the accommodation, including bathrooms, swimming pool and kitchen are adapted and have special signage for people with reduced vision. In addition, they have agreements with a dozen agencies specialised in accessibility and work with local operators to make their offer as inclusive as possible (hot air balloon trips, visits to

wineries...), thus contributing to the accessible value chain.

**Results:** More than 10% of their customers, including families with elderly people, have accessibility needs and come from around 10 different countries. The UNWTO recognised them in 2020 as one of the eleven accessible initiatives in its publication “Accessibility and inclusive tourism development in natural areas” (May 2021)<sup>28</sup>.





### Category 3

# Management and promotion of accessibility in tourism



Winner: Category 3

# COCEMFE



**Type of promoter:** Non-profit organisation

**Operating location:** Spain

**Objective:** To defend the right to enjoy leisure and tourism for people with physical and organic disabilities.

**Activity:** It organises group trips on equal terms for people with disabilities and works with suppliers specialised in accessibility. The experience is researched in advance and planned from end to end, i.e. from accommodation to leisure activities, including transport and adaptability of the surroundings, all supervised by trained monitors. Some of the activities they do during these trips are skiing, archery, quad biking, scuba diving and sailing.

**Results:** During all these years they have organised trips for more than 34,000 people with disabilities. Their activities include training and awareness-raising on inclusivity in tourism and support to organisations and public administrations in their accessibility plans. In addition, 50% of the staff has some kind of disability.



## Finalist: Category 3



### Viajeros sin límite

**Type of promoter:** Limited Company (until 2020)

**Location where it operates:** Spain and various international destinations

**Aim:** To visually present accessible destinations and activities in order to promote a more accessible tourist offer.

**Activity:** Miguel Nonay, the founder, travels with his wheelchair to different international destinations through their offer and facilities and carries out activities such as diving, jet skiing and paragliding, to check the degree of accessibility, focusing on motor diversity although with room for others. If the degree of accessibility is correct, it turns the experience into a video that it publishes on its blog. The project helps both to identify potential

accessible destinations and to promote them through audiovisual content. In the event that the degree of accessibility is low, it indicates to the establishment or experience what the points for improvement are.

**Results:** It has visited two hundred and thirty-five tourist destinations in Spain, where it has helped more than 1,000 hotels to promote accessibility, and has made trips to one hundred and forty-three countries to carry out its activity. Among them, three trips to the Sahara advising three travel agencies. Internationally, it has helped more than 700 hotels. He has received over 11,000 emails from people who have travelled thanks to the videos they have seen on his blog. He has received two international awards in recognition of his work.

## Finalist: Category 3



### Plan de turismo accesible (Tourism General Directorate of the Valencian Community)

**Type of promoter:** Public Administration

**Location where it operates:** Valencian Community

**Aim:** To be an accessible destination for social justice and competitiveness.

**Activity:** Publication of guides and manuals and creation of different programmes to make the tourist offer of the Valencian Community as accessible as possible. Through a series of handbooks and training programmes, with accessible content, they facilitate the implementation of services adapted for any type of disability in the region's destinations. They have agreements with 3 organisations: COCEMFE, for tourism promotion; Asindown, dedicated to the training of people with Down syndrome and their incorporation into the

tourism sector; and PREDIF, to encourage debate and reflection on inclusive tourism in different aspects. The accessibility manuals they have published were produced together with PREDIF. They also organise congresses with PREDIF (TUR4all) to train the tourism supply in a more specialised way.

**Results:** All the beaches in the Community are accessible, and the urban ones have monitors to carry out accessible activities. All tourist offices are accessible. With their actions, they have managed to get tourism entrepreneurs to work as a system and to go beyond what is required by law. In addition, the evaluations carried out through surveys on the whole value chain have obtained a result of 6.5 (out of 10).

## Finalist: Category 3



### Plan Turismo para Todos (Catalan Tourism Agency)

**Type of promoter:** Administración Pública

**Location where it operates:** Catalonia

**Aim:** To develop tourism for all in Catalonia and of quality that everyone can go to, including people with disabilities, whether reduced mobility, hearing or visual impairments.

**Activity:** They put resources on the web to help the tourism sector adapt its offer, including the “Tourism for all” guide. They identify accessible tourism resources through a face-to-face or documentary analysis, and keep the information updated so that tourists can find services adapted to their needs. They also carry out specific training for the sector on

accessibility issues, including communication and awareness-raising actions, with the aim of helping to adapt the offer.

**Results:** They have published an accessible information and training manual (Tourism for all, in html5) for companies that decide to offer products and services accessible to all people, where advice and ideas are collected to improve the quality of the facilities, whether they are urban or rural hotel accommodation, rural houses, campsites, etc. Twenty-six destinations and 1,200 accessible resources have been identified, five hundred of them following on-site visits.



## Finalist: Category 3



## Equalitas Vitae

**Type of promoter:** Limited Society

**Location where it operates:** Spain

**Aim:** Search for egalitarian tourism, without criticism of those who do not comply, giving visibility and helping those who do so and go beyond.

**Activity:** It is a consultancy of accessible products that helps and certifies destinations, accommodation and experiences to be more inclusive. It has the collaborative platform Silleros Viajeros, where together with forty collaborators who have disabilities, they show accessible tourism resources from their own experience. They also offer specialised training in tourism accessibility by sector and activity.

**Results:** As a consultancy, they have helped various town councils, accommodation and other experiences to become more accessible and accredited as such. One of their success stories has been the 20% increase in visits to a winery in La Rioja following their consultancy programme. They have trained the staff of large hotel chains (300 people) and tourist guide associations (200 people). With regard to their content creation platform, they have 3,500 accessible tourism resources published on the blog.

## Finalist: Category 3



## Dominican Access

**Type of promoter:** Social Enterprise

**Location where it operates:** Dominican Republic

**Aim:** Inclusion of people with disabilities.

**Activity:** They support companies, with a focus on hotels and accessible tourism, so that they can be more inclusive, especially in aspects such as communication and the different processes involved in accommodation. In 2015 they organised the first accessible tourism congress in the Dominican Republic and in 2019 they published a guide to customer service with disabilities, which is free to download and accessible. On the other hand, they provide universal accessibility training for architects and designers.

**Results:** The entity has worked on the diagnosis of two hotels and has carried out 5 congresses on accessible tourism, contributing to the increase of awareness on this issue in the Dominican Republic. The customer service guide includes an analysis of one hundred hotels, seventy-four of which have a high degree of accessibility. They work with organisations of people with disabilities to generate employment and act as a link with the tourism sector for their inclusion in the labour market, having achieved between 10 and 15 new hires. They have impacted more than 5,000 people in their talks and training.

## Finalist: Category 3



### Borja, con todos los sentidos

**Type of promoter:** Public Administration

**Location where it operates:** Borja, Spain

**Aim:** To help and accompany people with disabilities and all the families who depend on them in their visit to the municipality and its cultural offer.

**Activity:** The project disseminates the monumental and museum value of the municipality to the public through its 3 museums, in an inclusive way. The accessible resources offered include: twenty tablets with videos in sign language about the monuments and works on display in the centres for deaf people, QR codes with downloadable information adapted to each museum location, inclusive plasmas, Braille picture books and

audio guides on the back of the museum display cases so that users can listen to and/or see the content via an app. Museums are 100% accessible for people with reduced mobility and staff have received comprehensive training in accessibility.

**Results:** So far 5% of the more than 4,000 visits received after the post-COVID reactivation have some kind of disability. In addition, local people with disabilities have been able to enjoy the local cultural attractions and have carried out awareness-raising actions with the complementary offer on accessibility so that they adapt their facilities.





Part 3

# Winning initiatives toolkit



# TUR4all (PREDIF)



## Contribution to the challenge

- Accessible digital platform that acts as a collaborative database of accessible tourism resources of any kind.
- PREDIF also carries out accessibility training actions.
- They allow tourist resources to advertise themselves free of charge as accessible and to be valued, contributing to their promotion and easy location by the demand.

## Contribution to the tourism sector

TUR4all provides something very necessary nowadays in terms of accessibility: information on whether a resource is really accessible, where it is located and what type of accessibility it has. In addition, it is valued by the users themselves to “certify” their degree of accessibility, one of the biggest current problems when travelling.

## Replicability framework

### Development

It is a standard in several countries. The driving force has been promoting inclusive travel since 2012 and has been replicated in Portugal. In addition, the platform is in conversations with other regions to expand further.

### Documentation

The processes are documented to enable the replicability of the practice, as indicated by the fact that it has already been replicated in another country.

### Resources

The resources needed to replicate this initiative are set at a financial level between \$25,000 and \$100,000 and at a human level between 5 and 25 people. In this sense, the barriers to replicating the initiative are not very high.

### Dependencies

It does not need anything specific in terms of special regulation or special permits. As it is inclusive travel, in many countries there are laws that require a certain level of accessibility.

### Transfer

Documentation would be shared under certain conditions set by the initiative and agreed with potential replicators.

### Ecosystem

In terms of external partners needed, it requires that actors are willing to take an active role. This is key due, on the one hand, to the need to have an accessible tourism offer that is part of the database of the country where it will be replicated, and on the other hand, to have users who proactively feed this database with their evaluations and accessible resources detected.

## Replicable elements

Digital platform with accessible resources where users can also upload and rate content.

Tools:

- Digital platform.
- Database of accessible resources.
- Network of users who contribute new content and can evaluate existing one.

## Who can replicate

Organisations that carry out activities focused on more accessible tourism and seek to make the leap to the digitalisation of resources and the active participation of users.



# Because We Care (Albastar)



## Contribution to the challenge

- Creation of routes to pilgrimage sites
- Enable people with any disability to use the aircraft as a means of transport
- Train staff to be able to serve them with quality and dignity

## Contribution to the tourism sector

With the Because We Care initiative, AlbaStar enables the supply and demand of religious and similar tourism to be expanded, allowing for an increase in the number of trips and, therefore, the influx to pilgrimage destinations by people who seek these experiences due to their personal situation.

## Replicability framework

### Development

It is an international standard. The driving force has been enabling people with any type of disability to travel as comfortably and equally as possible to various international destinations, including several related to pilgrimage, since 2010.

### Documentation

The processes are partially documented to enable their replicability.



### Resources

The resources needed to replicate this initiative are set at a financial level between \$5,000 and \$25,000 and at a human level between 5 and 25 people. The figures show that the barriers to replicating the initiative are medium.

### Dependencies

Need approval from official entities. As these are flights and some of the elements they allow on their aircraft, this is one of the keys to replicability.

### Transfer

The documentation would be left open to all to make it easier for other airlines to adapt their flights.

### Ecosystem

In terms of necessary external partners, an ecosystem of actors exists but is rarely articulated, making it easier to set up a similar initiative.

## Replicable elements

Idea: Specialisation in pilgrim routes to enable people with any type of disability to travel.

Tools:

- Training and awareness-raising in specialised centres.
- Materials and content adapted to any type of disability.
- Collaboration with specialised tour operators
- Capacity to transport auxiliary materials and guide animals.

## Who can replicate

Mainly airlines, but also other means of medium and long distance transport.



# Inclusive tourism programme (COCEMFE)



## Contribution to the challenge

- Organises trips several times a year for groups of people with all types of disabilities.
- Participates in the training of organisations.
- Helps organisations and public administrations to create accessibility plans.

## Contribution to the tourism sector

COCEMFE, with its activities and specifically with its inclusive tourism programme, promotes group trips and leisure activities for people who would otherwise find it very difficult to do so.



## Replicability framework

### Development

It is a well-established standard. The driving force has been planning, designing and developing activities since 1986 that have enabled the participation of all people with equal opportunities, regardless of their physical, social and cultural conditions.

### Documentation

Processes are documented to enable replicability.

### Resources

The resources needed to replicate this initiative are set at a financial level at less than \$5,000 and at a human level at less than 5 people, showing that, in this sense, the barriers to replicating the initiative are low.

### Dependencies

Support is needed to facilitate its implementation, such as a regulatory framework to enable accessible tourism for all.

### Transfer

Documentation would be shared with certain conditions set by the initiative and agreed with potential replicators.

### Ecosystem

In terms of external partners needed, some actors need to be encouraged to change procedures.

## Replicable elements

Idea: Creating end-to-end accessible journeys for people with all types of disabilities.

Tools:

- Research into all elements of the journey.
- Collaboration with specialised suppliers.
- Trained monitors.

## Who can replicate

Travel agencies looking for new market niches.  
Organisations committed to accessible travel.



Part 4

# Conclusions and learnings





**As the most basic learning point, accessibility goes far beyond putting ramps and wide doors in bathrooms. Urban spaces and tourist destinations, regardless of their size, are places to live in and visit as comfortably as possible, not a barrier to be overcome on a daily basis from the moment you leave your home or hotel.**

From the analysis of the situation and the initiatives contributing to the implementation of accessible tourism, three general conclusions can be drawn.

The first one: accessibility goes beyond the elimination of barriers, the objective is “tourism for all”. The concept of accessible tourism has evolved towards what is now called tourism for all<sup>29</sup>, the former being limited to the elimination of physical barriers. Tourism for everyone, based on the concept of Universal Design, understood as “the design of products and environments suitable for use by the

greatest number of people without the need for adaptations or specialised design”, aims to create tourist destinations whose spaces are not adapted for tourists with disabilities, but which can be enjoyed on equal terms by all travellers, whether or not they suffer from any kind of disability.

As indicated by the UNWTO in its handbook on accessible tourism and tourism for all, there is still a long way to go to make universal accessibility a reality in the tourism sector, especially in developing countries and emerging destinations. Even so, it should be noted that tourism is a source of employment for people with disabilities, as can be seen in the example of some of the initiatives in this edition and in the case of Ilunion Hotels seen in previous points.

Tourism, among other factors, plays an important role in achieving a more accessible society. And accessibility, as indicated by the UNWTO, is a very relevant aspect for the reactivation of tourism activity.

Secondly, tourism accessibility is limited by the least accessible link in the value chain. These elements, as we have seen in previous points, and which we repeat due to their importance,



would be the following, according to the UNWTO:

- Planning and information
- Transport
- Accessibility to the environment
- Accessibility to common areas
- Accessibility to specific spaces

In terms of accessibility, generating an ecosystem that maintains all the links of the chain strong is essential to overcome those limitations.

Thirdly, accessibility promoters are highly prepared and willing to share their knowledge, tools and experience. The replicability assessment of most of the initiatives has been very high, even in private companies such as AlbaStar.

In view of the above, we can affirm that, although there is still a long way to go, tourism can contribute to creating a more accessible society.

In fact, Europe, the continent that receives the most travellers, with seven hundred and ten million in 2018<sup>30</sup>, more than half of the total number of international users, stands out for its many accessible cities and projects

that are committed to improving the living conditions of both residents and visitors. In the compendium of best practices in accessibility and inclusive tourism development in natural spaces, developed by the UNWTO in 2021<sup>31</sup> and presented at the FiturNext stand (Fitur, May 2021), of the eleven practices selected, eight were European, including six Spanish, one Asian, one American and one global. It is worth highlighting the weight of the Spanish initiatives, a country that received 83.7 million tourists in 2019.

**FiturNext, in this new edition, wants to contribute to the rapid extension of “tourism for all” by making available to all agents the formulas for achieving the positive impact of its winners and finalists.**



The background of the top section is a photograph of a library. In the center, an open book is held up, showing its pages. To the left and right are tall stacks of books. In the background, there are bookshelves filled with books. A small, warm light source, possibly a lamp, is visible on the right side of the background image.

## Part 5

# Repository of initiatives belonging to previous editions of FiturNext

## **FiturNext 2020 Challenge: How can tourism contribute to local economic development?**



### **Winners**

Apadrina un Olivo  
Fundación Starlight  
Soap for Hope

### **Finalists**

Vías Verdes  
Local Alike  
Pichaeats  
Fundación Yetapá  
Taste of Fethiye  
NotOnMap  
Totonál  
Plan Wallata  
Favela Tour

## **FiturNext 2021 Challenge: How tourism can contribute to gender equality**



### **Winners**

Afrikable  
Women in Travel  
Fundación Codespa

### **Finalists**

Open Eyes Project  
Active Woman  
RaizUp  
Women in eTravel  
Equality Tourism  
Fundación Santander (Best Africa)  
Fundación EnVía  
Fundación Barceló  
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