

Terms and References for the National Challenge:

UN Tourism Bahamas Sustainable Island Challenge

Country of Execution: The Bahamas

Title of the Project: UN Tourism Bahamas Sustainable Island Challenge

1.) Introduction and Background:

UN Tourism and The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation are joining forces in this startup challenge to source the most sustainable, innovative and disruptive business models to provide answers and smart solutions to the complex challenges the Bahamas is facing as a Small Island Developing State (SID).

Tourism plays a major role in the Bahamian economy, with a record-breaking 11,2 million international visitors in 2024. The sector accounts for an estimated 50% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and directly and indirectly employs nearly 70% of the Bahamian workforce¹. This heavy reliance on tourism makes the sector a key driver of the country's economic growth, providing a stable source of foreign exchange and enabling investments in infrastructure, hotels, and services.

However, as an archipelago of about 700 islands and over 2,000 cays spread across the Atlantic Ocean, the Bahamas has seen varying tourism trends, with significant challenges due to external factors like climate change and mass tourism.

Tourism has become the main economic activity, not only for the Bahamas but for many islands around the world, creating much-needed job opportunities and bringing in important income and foreign exchange earnings. The special geographical situation and their immense natural and cultural richness make islands unique for visitors, but at the same time, confront them with a number of challenges and vulnerabilities.

Therefore, this Challenge seeks to engage entrepreneurs and stakeholders from the Bahamas who can contribute to the sustainable management of coastal areas and marine life, enhance the well-being of local communities, and develop green technologies to benefit both Bahamians and visitors. Through this call, we aim to identify and support those who play a pivotal role in strengthening the resilience of the islands' tourism ecosystem, including connectivity, infrastructure and transportation.

Selected finalists will be invited to pitch their solutions in the Bahamas at the UN Tourism Tech Adventures, and benefit from the UN Tourism Innovation Network, including potential access to finance, pilot projects, and global visibility.

The World Tourism Organization (hereinafter, UN Tourism is the United Nations agency responsible for promoting tourism as a factor of sustainable, responsible, accessible, and inclusive development for all.

¹ <https://www.bahamasmission.ch/the-bahamian-economy/>

As the main international body in tourism, it brings together 160 countries, 6 associate members, and over 500 affiliated members, including private sector entities such as academic institutions, tourism associations, and local tourism authorities.

One of UN TOURISM's strategic priorities is to make tourism a smarter sector through innovation and digital transformation; to enhance tourism competitiveness through investment and entrepreneurship; to create more and better jobs with education as support; to develop resilience and facilitate travel; and to protect heritage with social, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

In this context, UN TOURISM leads tourism policies aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to contribute to their achievement.

Through its Innovation, Education, and Investment Department, UN TOURISM has developed 33 global entrepreneurship competitions ("UN Tourism Startup Competitions"), innovation and technology forums ("UN Tourism Tech Adventures"), and local challenges ("UN Tourism Local Challenges"), creating an Innovation Network of over 500 entrepreneurs, 930 companies, 300 public institutions, 50 educational institutions, 30 incubators, and 200 investors. The connection within this ecosystem has facilitated more than 45 million euros in financing for new companies with disruptive solutions.

2.) The Challenge:

UN Tourism proposes the launch of a Startup Challenge designed to identify and develop innovative startups across The Bahamas. This Challenge will culminate in a high-profile final Pitch Challenge, known as the "Tourism Tech Adventures (TTA)." The overarching goal is to collaboratively source, nurture, and support startups that will help position The Bahamas at the forefront of tourism technology, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and resilience.

The initiative will foster innovation and promote new business models and technologies, creating a dynamic ecosystem that not only meets current demands but also anticipates future tourism trends. This approach ensures that The Bahamas remains a vibrant and attractive destination through sustainable and innovative tourism practices.

Key objectives include:

- **Identifying High-Potential Startups:** Through a rigorous selection process, the Challenge will identify startups with scalable and impactful solutions in tourism technology.
- **Providing Comprehensive Support:** Selected startups will receive mentorship and training from industry experts, focusing on scalability strategies, business model optimization, and effective pitching techniques.
- **Facilitating Strategic Partnerships:** The final Pitch Challenge will serve as a platform for startups to connect with leading corporations, investors, and key stakeholders, fostering potential collaborations and investment opportunities.
- **Promoting Sustainable Innovation:** Emphasis will be placed on solutions that contribute to the ecological transition and inclusivity in tourism, aligning with global sustainability goals.
- **Showcasing The Bahamas as a Hub of Innovation:** By highlighting innovative solutions and successful startups, the event will reinforce The Bahamas's reputation as a pioneering destination in the realm of tourism activities.

Through this comprehensive approach, the Tourism Tech Challenge and the TTA Pitch Challenge aim to drive forward-thinking advancements in the tourism sector, ensuring that The Bahamas remains a leader in adopting and promoting sustainable and resilient tourism practices.

Innovation Challenge

Three months before the event there will be a launch of a call for innovative startups in The Bahamas to present solutions to specific challenges in the themes of Ocean and Marine Conservation, Local and Community-based Tourism and Green Tech for Sustainable Tourism. Entrepreneurs who apply will be evaluated based on feasibility and scalability criteria by a defined committee, following the successful methodology applied in UN Tourism's Innovation programs.

This Challenge will have three categories based on the needs and critical points of the sector, accepting submissions from startups and traditional companies or corporations on the themes of Ocean and Marine Conservation, Local and Community-based Tourism and Green Tech for Sustainable Tourism.

For these categories, standout initiatives that meet the required characteristics and excel in their potential to contribute to the recovery and transformation of tourism will be selected. These initiatives will have the opportunity to pitch their ideas at the UN Tourism Tech Adventures innovation forum.

3.) Conditions for Participation:

This challenge is open to entrepreneurs legally based in the Bahamas, whether individuals or legal entities, who are of legal age and have the legal capacity to enter into contracts, and whose representatives have not been convicted by a final judgement for intentional crimes, with a penalty of six months or more, insofar as the criminal responsibility has not expired.

The projects can focus on various methods, processes, governance structures, social impact initiatives, technological applications, or other forms of innovation. Specifically, startups, scaleups and MSMEs should meet the following criteria:

- Be innovative and provide value-added solutions for accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Be scalable.
- Have potential for international growth.
- Have a Minimum Viable Product, or a project that is ready to be implemented.

4.) Requirements:

4.1 Designed to encourage companies to collaborate on major issues facing the tourism industry, the UN Tourism Bahamas Sustainable Island Challenge allows projects, entrepreneurs and startups to present their ideas for the categories below. Applicants will be evaluated based on the following criteria by a dedicated committee, using the successful methodology applied in UN Tourism's Innovation programs:

- Innovation Potential: The originality and novelty of the proposed solution, focusing on how the innovation brings fresh perspectives and groundbreaking approaches to the tourism sector.
- Feasibility: The practicality and viability of implementing the solution, with consideration for technical, operational, and resource-based aspects that ensure its successful execution.
- Scalability: The potential for the solution to be expanded and applied on a larger scale, demonstrating adaptability to diverse markets and readiness for growth.

- Collaboration Synergy: The effectiveness and complementary strengths of the startup and corporate partnership, evaluating how the collaboration enhances the development and impact of the solution.

4.2 Categories:

1. Ocean and Marine Conservation:

This category focuses on solutions for protecting and restoring the Bahamas' marine and shore ecosystems. Solutions could include coral reef restoration technologies, sustainable fisheries management tools, plastic waste reduction innovations, eco-friendly marine tourism, and climate resilience projects such as mangrove restoration. These initiatives should aim to preserve biodiversity, promote sustainable use of marine resources, and enhance community participation in ocean conservation.

2. Local and Community-based Tourism:

This category sources solutions that empower local communities and promote sustainable tourism practices across the Bahamas. Innovations could include platforms or programs for community-driven cultural and eco-tourism, tools to enhance the visibility and accessibility of small-scale tourism operators, or creative ways to reduce the environmental impact of tourism activities. Solutions should focus on fostering inclusive economic growth, preserving Bahamian culture and heritage, and supporting sustainable practices that benefit both local residents and the environment.

3. Green Tech for Sustainable Tourism:

This category seeks innovative green technologies that support sustainable tourism and environmental resilience across the Bahamas. Solutions may include clean energy systems tailored for island environments (such as solar, wind, or tidal power), water and energy efficiency innovations for tourism facilities, sustainable waste management technologies, or low-carbon transport options for visitors. Additionally, technologies that help manage tourism flows and mitigate the impacts of mass tourism—such as visitor monitoring tools, dynamic capacity management systems, or smart zoning strategies—are encouraged. Proposals should demonstrate how technology can reduce the environmental footprint of tourism, strengthen climate resilience, and contribute to a circular economy, while ensuring long-term benefits for local communities and ecosystems.

4.3. Key Requirements

Selected initiatives will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Proven Innovation: Deployment of solutions that showcase significant technological advancements relevant to tourism's recovery and transformation.
- Scalability and Global Impact: The ability to scale solutions across markets, with clear potential for global adoption.
- Sustainability and SDG Alignment: Demonstrated commitment to sustainability, contributing to environmental conservation and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Collaboration Effectiveness: Strong partnerships between startups and corporations, ensuring that their collaboration results in enhanced innovation and market impact.
- Market Readiness and Customer Fit: Evidence of customer demand, market fit, and readiness for real-world implementation.
- Financial Stability: Robust financial backing and a solid business model to support long-term growth.
- Innovation Ecosystem Engagement: Participation in multi-stakeholder collaborations to ensure broader adoption and integration within the tourism sector.

Standout initiatives that meet these criteria will be invited to pitch their solutions at the "UN Tourism Tech Adventure - Bahamas" (TTA), providing a unique opportunity to present to an audience of industry stakeholders, investors, and policymakers. The challenge will take place online, although UN Tourism reserves the right to organize the challenge in person, in which case it will communicate the date and venue of the challenge in due course.

4.4 Purpose

- Encourage the development of cutting-edge solutions for the modernization and recovery of the tourism sector through collaborative new business models and technologies, leveraging the strengths of both startups and large corporations.
- Gather representatives from tourism innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, including startups and large corporations, to share knowledge, business models, and success stories, fostering a collaborative environment for mutual growth and innovation.
- Stimulate synergies between public sector entities, startups, academia, corporations, investors, and accelerators.
- Foster a strong culture of investment in tourism with the participation of venture capital and corporate financing.
- Strengthen the Bahamas' positioning on the global tourism innovation map.

4.5. Exclusion from participation

Participants who initially or at any moment during the Challenge fail to comply with any of the requirements established in these terms and conditions shall be excluded from said Challenge and from any potential service or prize they would have received through their participation.

Employees of UN TOURISM may not participate. Minors are excluded from participating in the challenge.

UN TOURISM shall not be liable for any false, inaccurate, obsolete, incomplete or erroneous data submitted by the participants. In such cases, the participant shall be automatically excluded from the challenge and lose the right to the enjoyment of the prize.

UN Tourism reserves the right of accepting or removing from the Challenge, without prior notice, any participants who, in their opinion, act fraudulently, in an abusive manner, or in a manner contrary to the spirit of the Challenge, the principles of the United Nations or the 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 UN Tourism may be removed from the Challenge. None of the abovementioned actions shall entitle any potential or excluded participants to make claims against UN TOURISM for any damages, expenses incurred, or otherwise.

5.) Application Process

Startups which comply with all the requirements described in section 4 "requirements" can apply to this challenge by selecting one of the categories of section 4.2. above.

Although projects commonly contribute to more than one SDG, the one in which the positive impact is expected to be stronger should be selected. To become a Participant, applicants shall complete the Online registration form available on the website.

Applicants shall complete in English all required fields requested in the form. The data that participants provide when registering in the program must be true, and therefore any participants whose data is incorrect, or incomplete shall lose any option to participate in the program and to receive any service.

UN TOURISM will use the contact information provided through the online registration to contact participants. UN TOURISM will not be responsible for incomplete or incorrect contact information.

6.) Tentative Schedule:

31 July 2025:

Launch of Call for Applications: Announcement and opening of the application process for the startup Challenge.

July-October 2025:

Promotion and Outreach: Active promotion of the Challenge through various channels to attract high-potential startups.

Webinars and Info Sessions: Conduct webinars and information sessions to guide potential applicants on the application process and Challenge details.

10 October 2025:

Application Submission Deadline: Closing date for startups to submit their applications.

October 2025:

Initial Screening: Review and initial screening of all submitted applications to shortlist high-potential startups.

Announcement of Shortlisted Startups: Public announcement of the startups that have been shortlisted for the next round.

October 2025:

Incubation Program Begins: Start of the mentorship and training program for shortlisted startups offering ongoing support and training for shortlisted startups, focusing on business development, scalability, and pitching.

October 2025:

On-site Mentoring & Final Pitch Challenge: Intensive preparation for the final pitch, including mock sessions and feedback from mentors. At the TTA Startups present their pitches to a panel of judges, including leading corporations, investors, and key stakeholders. Winners are announced, and strategic partnerships are facilitated.

Late 2025:

Post-Event Follow-Up: Follow-up with winners and participants to ensure ongoing support and track the implementation of their solutions.

7.) Selection Process and Criteria

7.1. A panel of experts from UN TOURISM and The Bahamas will evaluate the proposals based on innovation, feasibility, growth potential, and social and environmental impact.

7.) Evaluation Criteria

Each criterion is scored from 1 to 4 with 1 being the lowest and 4 the highest:

Criteria	Details	Score de 1 a 4
1. Innovation and Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originality of the Project: Degree of innovation and creativity in the proposal. • Integration of Technology: Digitalization of the project and use of technologies. • Disruptive Business Models: Implementation of business models that could transform community tourism. • Prototype Implemented and Validated: Whether it has a robust or light prototype, but one that presents iteration and improvement opportunities with users/communities. 	
2. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological Impact: Measures to reduce carbon footprint and protect local ecosystems. • Conservation Practices: Strategies to promote biodiversity and the conservation of natural resources. • Use of Renewable Energy: Implementation of clean and sustainable energy sources. • Alignment with the SDGs: Contribution of the project to at least one of the SDGs established by the UN. • Impact Measurement: Availability of metrics and indicators to evaluate the impact on the SDGs. • Long-Term Sustainability: Potential of the project to generate lasting positive effects on the SDGs. 	
3. Benefits for the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Job Creation: Potential of the project to create jobs in the community. • Community Empowerment: Level of participation and decision-making of community members. • Improvement of Community Quality of Life: Contributions to the wellbeing and quality of life of local residents. • Building Resilience: Measures to strengthen community resilience to economic, social, and environmental impacts. 	
4. Scalability and Internationalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion Potential: The project's ability to grow and be replicated in other areas and countries. • Adaptability to Different Contexts: Flexibility of the model to adapt to different communities and regions. • Resource Efficiency: Optimization of resource use for expansion. • Implementation Plan: Clarity and robustness of the execution plan and schedule. • Ability to Attract Partners: Potential to involve strategic partners and stakeholders and have clear investment amounts and return indicators. • Market Analysis: Understanding of the target market and its behaviour. 	

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7.3. Based on the above-mentioned criteria, initial screening and filtering of all applying entities will be carried out through the UN Tourism website. The first pre-selection will yield between 30 to 50 startups and corporations that will go through the next step.

7.4. An Expert Committee will be appointed by UN TOURISM. It will be composed of an international network of investors, entrepreneurs and experts from other UN agencies, UN TOURISM Member States, Affiliate Members and other strategic allies. The Committee members will be decided based on the final number of applications received. This Committee will evaluate the filtered projects and will carry out the selection of each winner. Decisions made by the Committee are final.

7.5 The evaluation process is strictly based on the specific project, not on other initiatives developed by the participants or their previous background. If the evaluation of the specific project reveals irregularities, the application will be disqualified.

8.) Benefits

Benefits will be granted to outstanding participants, which may include funding, connection with potential investors, mentoring for strengthening or scaling the prototype, visibility opportunities through the communication strategy of allied entities to the call, and access to networks. Details about the prizes and their distribution will be communicated to the selected participants during the development of the Challenge.

9.) Industrial and Intellectual Property and Personal Data Protection

In case the processing of personal data is required due to the development of the Program, the organizers of this Program assume the following commitments:

- To use the data provided only for the purpose of the call.
- To ensure that authorized persons for processing personal data (UN TOURISM and THE BAHAMAS) will commit to respecting confidentiality and that the data will not be shared with third parties without the participants' authorization.
- To take all necessary measures to offer an appropriate level of security to the risks that may arise from processing personal data, ensuring their security and integrity, as well as preventing their alteration, loss, accidental or unlawful destruction, processing, disclosure, or unauthorized access.

In case there is another data processor, the same protection obligations established by applicable regulations will be imposed. The participant may exercise their rights of access, rectification, cancellation, and opposition by sending a postal mail to the Organizer's address provided in the header of these Terms and Conditions or by sending an email to comm@UNTourism.org to contact the Organizer, indicating the right they wish to exercise and attaching a copy of their Passport, National Identity Document (DNI), or equivalent documentation.

- The participant expressly consents, solely by participating in the Program presented here, that UN TOURISM may use their name for the purpose of announcing the winning project to the other participants, without any remuneration in their favor.

When submitting applications, project promoters guarantee that:

- The projects are original to their authors and/or they have free disposal or ownership over them. Participants agree to indemnify and hold the organizers harmless against any legal actions, claims, or demands regarding intellectual property rights or personal data of third parties related to the projects they present.

- If the projects result from the collaboration of several participants, the project will be treated as a collaborative work, with the resulting rights belonging to all of them as co-authors.
- The participant authorizes UN TOURISM to upload the project summaries to their respective official websites and agrees that website visitors will have access to such information according to the website's terms of use.
- The participant authorizes UN TOURISM to use the name and title of their project, with no time limit, to be mentioned on the website or for any actions or events related in any way to UN TOURISM, as well as for inclusion in UN TOURISM's historical records and various media linked to the program.
- UN TOURISM will not claim any ownership of the information provided or any industrial or intellectual property it may contain. The participant does not assign any industrial or intellectual property rights derived from the projects to UN TOURISM.
- The participant expressly authorizes UN TOURISM to use their data to provide information about events and activities that may be of interest.
- Participants accept the transfer of their data to UN TOURISM after the challenge ends.

10.) Final Considerations

This Program may be modified, interrupted, and/or cancelled if justified circumstances require it. Likewise, UN TOURISM reserves the right to declare all or some of the benefits void if no project meets the expected quality according to the decision team's criteria. UN TOURISM is not responsible for any deficiencies in the platform or problems related to computers, networks, or any other cause that may result in the loss, damage, or delay of entries. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will be available on the challenge platform. In case of a conflict between these terms and conditions and our FAQs, these terms and conditions will prevail.

11.) Applicable Law and Dispute Resolution

These Terms and Conditions will be interpreted in accordance with the general principles of international law, excluding any specific national law.

Nothing within these Terms and Conditions or related to them shall be understood as a waiver of UN Tourism's prerogatives and immunities.

12.) Use of Name, Emblem, and Logo

Participants will not use in any way the name, emblem, or official seal of UN Tourism or the United Nations, or any abbreviation of the name of UN Tourism or the United Nations, in relation to their businesses or any other domain, without prior written authorization from UN Tourism. Under no circumstances will authorization be granted to use the name, emblem, or official seal of UN Tourism or the United Nations, or any abbreviation of their names, for commercial purposes. This obligation does not end with the termination of the Challenge.

13.) Indemnity and Limitation of Liability

UN Tourism will not be responsible under any circumstances for loss, direct, indirect, or accidental damage, liability, or expense incurred or suffered by the participant and alleged to be a consequence of the Challenge or related to it.

Participants agree to indemnify UN Tourism and hold it harmless from any legal responsibility, claims, losses, damages, and expenses that may arise, directly or indirectly, as a result of this Challenge or in relation to it, including but not limited to any infringement of intellectual property rights or other rights of third parties related to the submitted projects.

14.) Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

Participation in the Challenge implies full acceptance of these Terms and Conditions. The failure to accept any part of these Terms and Conditions will result in non-participation in the challenge, and if selected and/or awarded, automatic renunciation of recognition.