

Terms and References

UN Tourism Discover Lithuania Challenge

Country of Execution: Lithuania

Source market: European Region (European startups that can apply their solutions in Lithuania)

Title of the Project: UN Tourism Discover Lithuania Challenge

1) Introduction and Background

Tourism plays a vital role in shaping Lithuania's national identity and economy. As a hidden gem at the crossroads of Northern and Eastern Europe, Lithuania is home to UNESCO-listed heritage, deep forests, historic towns, vibrant creativity, and rich cultural traditions. With tourism currently accounting for 2.6% of the country's gross value added and international interest steadily growing, Lithuania is well positioned to become a case study for how innovative marketing and sustainable experiences can redefine destination visibility.

Today's travelers seek more than sights; they seek meaning, wellness, nature, and emotional connection. To compete in a crowded global tourism market, Lithuania must promote itself not just as a place to visit, but as a destination to feel. Yet challenges remain underrepresented in rural regions; seasonal fluctuations, and limited global awareness require smarter, more agile tourism innovation.

The Discover Lithuania Challenge calls on European startups, entrepreneurs, and creative thinkers to reimagine how Lithuania is promoted, experienced, and remembered. Through storytelling, sustainability, immersive technology, and smart travel tools, this challenge supports scalable, tech-enabled solutions that put Lithuania on the map in bold, meaningful, and memorable ways.

2) The Challenge

The challenge is designed to support forward-thinking entrepreneurs and tourism innovators in enhancing destination visibility through innovation by developing cutting-edge tools that market Lithuania in personalized and intelligent ways, leveraging technologies such as AI, AR/VR, gamification, and data analytics. It seeks to reimagine storytelling and brand identity by crafting authentic narratives rooted in Lithuania's heritage, nature, creativity, and communities, moving beyond traditional promotion toward experiential and values-driven engagement. The initiative also aims to drive inclusive and sustainable tourism growth by promoting lesser-known regions through eco-conscious and regenerative travel models, while empowering local guides, artisans, and rural communities. Finally, the challenge focuses on engaging the next generation of travelers through immersive, social, and gamified formats, supporting emerging trends such as wellness, micro-travel, and digital nomad experiences.

3) Conditions for Participation

This challenge is open to entrepreneurs, whether individuals or legal entities, who are of legal age and have the legal capacity to enter 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, entrepreneurs, startups, scaleups, tourism companies, and organizations should meet the following criteria:

- Have an innovative and/or disruptive nature.
- Offer sustainable and value-added solutions for the tourism sector.
- Leverage new technologies and innovative solutions in community-based tourism, accessibility, and/or green projects.
- Have potential for growth, scalability, and application.
- Preferably have a minimum viable product (MVP). However, projects that are ready to be developed, in later stages of the idea phase will also be considered.
- Have a structured business plan.
- Contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4) Requirements

Designed to encourage companies to collaborate on major issues facing the tourism industry, the UN Discover Lithuania Challenge allows projects, entrepreneurs, scaleups, tourism companies, organizations 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.

4.1 Categories

1. Explore Lithuania

Position Lithuania as a must-visit destination by leveraging technology to showcase its people, culture, heritage, modern lifestyle, and creativity. We are looking for digital solutions that turn Lithuania's unique cultural identity into immersive, shareable travel experiences.

2. Green Trails Lithuania

Position Lithuania as a premier green adventure destination by building smart, gamified tools that support long-distance hiking and biking.

3. Mindful Lithuania

Support the growth of forest retreats, meditation stays, health resorts, mineral water therapy, and slow travel through wellness-focused digital solutions.

4. Solo Travelers

Help solo travelers and digital nomads explore Lithuania freely and safely through platforms that offer social connection, flexibility, and discovery.

4.2 Key Requirements

Selected initiatives will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Be based in the European Region of UN Tourism: <https://www.untourism.int/europe/members>
- 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.

4.3 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 Lithuania's positioning on the global tourism innovation map.

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 objective, the category 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 online registration to contact participants. UN Tourism will not be responsible for incomplete or incorrect contact information.

6) Schedule

- January 2026: Launch of Call for Applications — Announcement and opening of the application process for the Startup Challenge.
- February – September 2026: Promotion and Outreach — Active promotion of the Challenge through various channels to attract high potential startups.
- September 2026: Application submission deadline.
- September 2026: Online pitched.
- End of September: Pitch at the Lithuania Travel Tech Event, 15-17 September.

7) Selection Process and Criteria

A panel of experts from UN Tourism and the partners of the Challenge will evaluate the proposals based on innovation, sustainability, inclusiveness, and green solutions for social impact.

7.1 Evaluation Criteria

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

- Innovation and creativity of the product/service: originality, disruptiveness.
- Viability of the business model.
- Maturity of the solution: proven business model.
- Scalability and Internationalization of the solution.
- Team composition, maturity and diversity of the team.
- The solution presents digital components.
- Social and environmental impact of the solution. Alignment with SDGs.

7.2

Based on the above-mentioned criteria, initial screening and filtering of all applying entities will be carried out by UN Tourism and its partners.

7.3

An Expert Committee will be appointed by UN Tourism. It will be composed of an international network of allies. The Committee will evaluate the filtered projects per category and will carry out the selection of each winner. Decisions made by the Committee are final.

7.4

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 include:

- Global visibility for their project and connection with investors.

- Possibility to present solutions at the UN Tourism Tech Adventures.
- Become part of the UN Tourism Innovation Network.
- Access scholarships from the UN Tourism Online Academy.

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) 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.

UN Tourism and any other data processor will follow the protection obligations established by applicable regulations. 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.int, indicating the right they wish to exercise and attaching a copy of their Passport, National Identity Document, 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 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 competition 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 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.

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 Competition.

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 Competition 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 Competition 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 References

Participation in the Competition 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 Competition, and if selected and/or awarded, automatic renunciation of recognition.