



# Best Tourism Villages Initiative

Version 8.0  
February 2026

# Our Vision

Make tourism a driver of rural development and wellbeing



# Our Mission

Advance the role of tourism in valuing and safeguarding rural villages along with their associated landscapes, knowledge systems, biological and cultural diversity, local values and activities.

Promote innovative and transformative approaches to the development of tourism in rural destinations that contribute to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



# Our Objectives

1. Reduce regional inequalities in income and development
2. Fight depopulation
3. Progress gender equality and women's and youth empowerment
4. Promote rural transformation and strengthen traction capacity
5. Strengthen multi-level-governance, partnerships and the active involvement of communities
6. Improve connectivity, infrastructure, access to finance and investment
7. Advance innovation and digitalization
8. Innovate in product development and value chain integration
9. Promote the relationship between sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems and tourism
10. Advance the conservation of natural and cultural resources
11. Promote sustainable practices for a more efficient use of resources & a reduction of emissions and waste
12. Enhance education and skills



# The Best Tourism Villages initiative

1. Best Tourism Villages
2. Upgrade Programme
3. Best Tourism Villages Network



# Best Tourism Villages

The Best Tourism Villages aims to recognize a village which is an outstanding example of a rural tourism destination with recognized cultural and natural assets, that preserves and promotes community-based values, products and lifestyle and has a clear commitment to sustainability in all its aspects – economic, social and environmental with the fundamental aim of making tourism one of the drivers of positive transformation, rural development and community well-being.

# Upgrade Programme

The Upgrade Programme provides selected villages among those that applied and were not recognized as Best Tourism Villages with an opportunity to improve aspects of their tourism development, strengthen their applications, and increase their potential for recognition as Best Tourism Villages.



# Best Tourism Villages Network

The members of the Network are those villages recognised as Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism, and those selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme.

The BTV Network is a space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learning, and opportunities among its members, and it is open to contributions of experts and public and private sector partners engaged in the promotion of tourism as a driver for rural development.



# Requisites for application

In line with the UN Tourism definition of Rural Tourism, a village must present the following features to be eligible for application:

- Have a low population density and a maximum of 15.000 inhabitants.
- Be located in a landscape with an important presence of traditional activities such as agriculture, forestry, livestock or fishing.
- Share community values and lifestyle.

UN Tourism Member States are invited to submit up to a maximum of eight applications (villages)



# Areas of evaluation

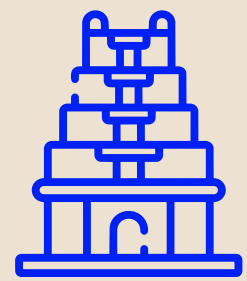
- Cultural and Natural Resources
- Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources
- Economic Sustainability
- Social Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration
- Governance and Prioritization of Tourism
- Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Health, Safety and Security

# Areas of evaluation (I)



## Cultural and Natural Resources

The village has natural and cultural (tangible and intangible) resources recognized at national, regional or international level.



## Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources

The village is committed to the promotion and conservation of its cultural resources which make it unique and authentic.



## Economic Sustainability

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



# Areas of evaluation (II)



## Social Sustainability

The village is committed to promote social inclusion and equality.



## Environmental Sustainability

The village is committed to environmental sustainability through the promotion and/or dissemination of policies, measures and initiatives that advance the preservation and conservation of its natural resources and minimize the impact of tourism on the environment.



## Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration

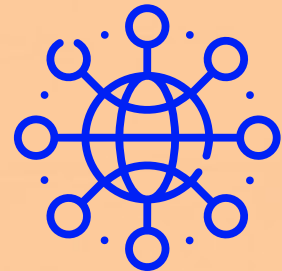
The tourism in the village is significantly marketed and developed. The village further promotes the enhancement of the tourism value chain and the competitiveness of the destination in areas related to market access, marketing and promotion, innovation, product development and quality.

# Areas of evaluation (III)



## Governance and Prioritization of Tourism

The village is committed to make tourism a strategic pillar for rural development. It promotes a governance model based on public-private partnerships, cooperation with other government levels and the engagement of the community.



## Infrastructure and Connectivity

The village has infrastructure to facilitate access and communications that improve the wellbeing of rural communities, business development as well as visitors' experience.



## Health, Safety and Security

The village has/is close to health, safety and security systems to safeguard residents and tourists.



# Process

# UN Tourism Best Tourism Villages

## Selection Process



**Applications  
by Member  
States**



**Review by  
UN Tourism  
Secretariat**



**Evaluation  
by Advisory  
Board**



**Announce  
@UN Tourism  
Event**

# What is a Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism?



*A village committed to a vision  
of tourism as a tool for positive  
transformation, inclusive and  
sustainable development*





*A village  
that promotes and  
protects its nature and  
its culture*





*A village  
that values its  
gastronomy, its crafts  
and its people*

*A village  
that fosters  
innovation &  
entrepreneurship*





*A village  
that empowers its  
community*



*A village  
that works for the  
wellbeing of residents  
and visitors*





UN Tourism

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<https://tourism-villages.unwto.org/en/>

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