



Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO

Guidelines for Applications
2023 Edition

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March 2023

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1. Introduction

- When preparing the application(s) please carefully read this document along with the following documents (available at <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/the-initiative/>) :
- Terms and Conditions
- Areas of Evaluation
- Application Form (Word version)
- Candidacy Document
- General Presentation Template

2. General Considerations

- The Call for Applications is open to all UNWTO Member States¹ (herewith referred as Member(s))².
- UNWTO will provide each Member with a specific code for the purpose of the online application process.
- Applications are not open for individual candidacies by villages and must always be presented by a Member through the National Tourism Administration.
- Members can submit a maximum of **eight** villages per edition. An application form must be filled per each village.
- All communications related to this initiative will be directed to the contact person in the Member indicated in the application form. Please ensure that the contact details of the designated person are correct.

¹ Applications related to villages located in a territory that is the subject of a dispute, of sovereignty or other, before the United Nations will not be considered as per the Terms and Conditions of the Initiative.

² Please refer to the complete list of UNWTO's Member States at <https://www.unwto.org/member-states>

Applications must be submitted only through the online application form. No other form of applications will be considered.

- All information must be submitted in either **English or Spanish only**. Information in any other language will not be considered.
- All supporting files must not exceed 20MB (except for videos, which can have a limit of 30MB). If the file exceeds the size, a message will appear saying “*File exceeds maximum file size. File must be under: 20MB*” and it will not allow to upload the file.

3. Guidelines for Submitting Applications

IMPORTANT: Members are strongly recommended to submit their online application form as soon as possible and avoid sending it the last day (Friday 23rd June 2023, 23:59 (CEST)).

3.1. Filling the Online Application Form

- Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory. The online application form will not allow submission unless you have completed all mandatory fields.
- Online applications which are incomplete or received after the deadline (**23 June 2023, 23:59 CEST**) will not be accepted.
- The online application allows you to save content **before** submitting. This will allow you to access your form (or forms in case you are submitting more than one application) as you wish and continue filling in different fields and attach new documents before final submission.

- Once submitted, the application cannot be modified and will be considered the final version. Therefore, kindly recall to revise it carefully before submission and ensure that you do not forget to include any information and/or attach all the mandatory documents as well as the supporting documents.
- The information included in the online application is the full responsibility of the Member. UNWTO shall not be liable for any false, inaccurate, obsolete, incomplete, or erroneous data submitted. In such a case, the application shall be automatically excluded from the evaluation process and shall not be entitled to make any claims against UNWTO.
- All documents must be submitted in the format specified in the online application form and must not exceed the maximum length and/or size indicated. The title of each document should reflect the contents of the document.

How to Fill in the Online Application Form

1. Basic Information

- In this section (1. Basic Information), please provide the information requested in each corresponding field.
- Please make sure to write the exact name of the village (Field 1.1.).

When providing the geographical coordinates of the village (Field 1.3.), please use the decimal degrees format (latitude (-90.000/+90.000) and longitude (-180.000/+180.000) degrees).

- Considering that a maximum of 15.000 inhabitants is an eligibility pre-requisite, please indicate the number of inhabitants and do not forget to submit a supporting document on population census for the village for the latest year available. (Field 1.4.)

2. Key Tourism Data

- In this section (2. Key Tourism Data), if available, please provide the information requested in each of the fields on:
 - Visitors
 - Tourism products and tourism related businesses
 - Employment
- Please note that the information provided in this section will not be evaluated, although we encourage the village to provide with this data if available.

3. Motivation and Areas of Evaluation

- In this section (3. Motivation and Areas of Evaluation), please provide the information requested by uploading the following documents:
 - A **short video** either in English or Spanish (**maximum 2 minutes**) telling us why the village should become a Best Tourism Village by UNWTO. (Field 3.1.)
 - Format and limit specified: mp4 format, 2min max., 30MB max.
 - A **general presentation** following the structure provided in the template *General Presentation* available for download on the [website](#) (Field 3.2.)
 - The general presentation should be a “summary” of the candidacy. This is a good opportunity to stress the most relevant initiatives and highlights of the village, so make it as visual as possible (use bullet points, relevant pictures...) to showcase the information provided in the Candidacy Document. Keep in mind that this template is only a suggestion of how the information to be presented should be structured. Be **creative** to present the most relevant information in a concrete and orderly way.
 - Format and limit specified: PDF format, 12 slides max, 20MB max.
 - The document **Candidacy Document** duly filled. (Field 3.3.)

- In order to fill in this document, please read carefully the document Areas of Evaluation.
- The Candidacy Document is divided into the following sections:
 1. **Motivation**
 2. **Areas of Evaluation**
- Remember all questions marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory. In the case of selecting YES in the questions in the section **2. Areas of Evaluation**, it is also mandatory to answer the following question (*If selected YES, please provide...*). Failure to reply to this question will be considered as a NO answer.
- We strongly encourage candidates to focus on providing as much as possible specific and concrete information for the purpose of evaluation by the Advisory Board.
- In the field where candidates are asked to select to which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the initiatives implemented in each area of evaluation contribute to, we strongly recommend that only the ones that have an important contribution to the goal are selected (recommended between 3 and 4 SDGs per area of evaluation).
- Please do not exceed the word limit specified for each text box. We suggest the use of the 'Word Count' function to ensure that limits are not exceeded.
- In this document, applicants are invited to submit a maximum of 3 relevant supporting links per area of evaluation. Failure to submit the supporting links will result in the impossibility to assess adequately that area by the Advisory Board.
- Format and limit specified: PDF format, limit specified in the number of words allowed per question, 20MB max.

4. Supporting Visual Files

- In this section (4.1.), applicants are invited to upload supporting audio-visual files to help the Advisory Board get to know better the village and its activities.
 - **Images:** jpg. Up to 10 images. 20MB per file max.
 - **Videos:** mp4. Up to 3 videos. 30MB per file max.

- Participants are encouraged to provide audiovisual material of the best possible quality. Kindly note that in the case of being recognized as BTV, this material will be used for all communications.
- Candidates shall duly credit third party copyrights and license to use them when applicable or if requested by the Secretariat at any time.
- In this field, priority should be given to any official promotional video of the village.
- Each supporting file must not exceed 20MB (except for videos, which can have a limit of 30MB). If the file exceeds the size, a message will appear saying “File exceeds maximum file size. File must be under: 20MB” and it will not allow to upload the file.
- In section 4.2., applicants are invited to provide up to three YouTube links or to other similar video sharing platforms (i.e.: vimeo, Tencent, iQiyi, etc.) of promotional videos of the village (if any).

5. Compliance Framework

- In order to submit the online application form you will need to accept the provisions related to the following issues:
 - Compliance Framework
 - Undertaking Declaration, including acceptance of the Terms and Conditions
 - Data Protection Provisions

3.2. Submitting the Online Application Form

- Before submitting your application form kindly recall to revise it.
- Once submitted, the application cannot be modified and the submitted application will be considered as the final version.

- Once submitted you will receive a confirmation e-mail.
- Applications shall be submitted online before **23rd June 2023, 23:59 (CEST)**
- UNWTO will not be responsible for the late delivery of submissions due to the lack of planning or possible technical difficulties (such as the size limit of the attachments). It will be the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that submissions are received by the Secretariat on time.
- Kindly recall that by submitting the application, Members acknowledge their acceptance of the entire Terms and Conditions.

4. Process of the Initiative



5. Contact

- For any questions please contact the UNWTO Secretariat at besttourismvillages@unwto.org

6. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- **Who can apply?**

The Call for Applications is open to all UNWTO Member States³. Candidacies are not open for individual application by villages and must always be presented by a UNWTO Member State through the National Tourism Administration.

- **Does the size of a village matter?**

Yes, villages must not exceed 15.000 inhabitants. There is no minimum established.

- **Can a neighbourhood within a larger village apply?**

No, for the purpose of this initiative, neighbourhoods within a larger village cannot apply.

- **Can a small community present the candidacy jointly with other community/ies of the area (a cluster of villages) who are constituted under the same administrative structure?**

No joint candidatures can be submitted even if two (or more) villages are promoted as a single destination or are part of a destination cluster. It is recommended that the country submits two or three individual applications, one for each village.

- **When is the application deadline?**

The deadline for applications for the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative is **23rd June 2023, 23:59 (CEST)**.

- **When will the villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO be announced?**

The villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO and those included in the Upgrade Programme will be officially announced by the end of 2023. To allow for a considered and impartial evaluation of the applications, Member States and villages are kindly requested to refrain from requesting information on their applications during this process.

- **What are the benefits of participating in the initiative?**

³ Please refer to the complete list of UNWTO's Member States at <https://www.unwto.org/member-states>

The villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will benefit from international recognition as an outstanding example of a rural tourism destination and visibility, such as showcase in the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative website. They will also receive a diploma and/or plate signed by the UNWTO Secretary-General.

The villages included in the Upgrade Programme will receive support from UNWTO and Partners to improve elements of the areas identified as gaps in the evaluation process.

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

The 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.. Villages in the Network can also benefit from being included as case studies in UNWTO policy documents, guidelines, participating in rural development and tourism related events, etc. The Network will be enlarged every year with new villages in next editions of the initiative and aims at becoming the largest international network on rural tourism.

- **Do the villages recognised as Best Tourism Villages receive financial compensation?**

No financial compensation is given in connection with the initiative.

- **How do Member States apply?**

Applications must be submitted only **online** through the **online application form**.

UNWTO provides each Member State (National Tourism Administration) with a specific code for the purpose of the online application process.

- **Is there a fee for participating in the initiative?**

No, there is no fee for participating in the initiative.

- **How to submit online applications?**

Once completed, the online application form will be automatically submitted by clicking on 'Submit'. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address of the

Member State representative provided in the online application form (field 1.7.10.).

Please note that this person will be responsible for the communication and coordination of all issues related to the application(s) submitted by the Member State.

- **Which additional documents should be provided with the application?**

A valid Online Application Form must be accompanied by the following mandatory documents:

- Village's census population (census for the latest year available either in pdf) (field 1.4.)
- Short video telling why the village should become a Best Tourism Village by UNWTO (field 3.1.)
- General Presentation following the structure provided in the template "General Presentation" (field 3.2.)
- Candidacy Document duly filled (Field 3.3.)
- Supporting audio-visual files (Field 4.1.)

- **Can I save the online application form before submitting it?**

Yes, the online application allows you to save content **before** submitting. This will allow you to access your application form (or forms in case you are submitting more than one application) as you wish and continue filling in different fields and attach new documents before final submission.

Once submitted, the application cannot be modified and the submitted application will be considered as the final version. Therefore, kindly recall to revise it carefully before submission and ensure that you do not forget to include any information and/or attach all the mandatory documents as well as the supporting documents.

- **Can images and videos be attached to the online application?**

The following formats will be accepted as supporting files:

- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- PDF
- URL links

- Images (.jpg)
- Video (mp4)

Kindly recall that attachments must not exceed the maximum size indicated in the online application form (20MB).

- **How many villages can a Member State submit?**

Each Member State can submit a maximum of **eight** villages per edition. An application form must be filled per each village.

- **Who evaluates the Applications?**

Applications will be evaluated by an independent Advisory Board which will assess the information provided in the video, the General Presentation and the Candidacy Document.

To protect the independence of the Board, no information on the identity of the members is provided until the end of their mandate.

- **Are the areas of evaluation publicly available?**

Yes, areas of evaluation are available in three languages (EN, FR and SP) in the section Initiative of the Best Tourism Villages website.

- **How many villages will be selected in each category of the initiative?**

There is no established number for the villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages. For those in the Upgrade Programme, UNWTO will assess the limit in number of villages based on the results of the initiative.

- **Who to contact in case of technical problems or questions regarding the application?**

For any issues please contact the UNWTO Secretariat at besttourismvillages@unwto.org

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With the vision of making tourism a positive force for transformation, rural development and community wellbeing, the **Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO** initiative seeks to 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.

The **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**, a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism knowhow. Its membership includes 160 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members.