



12TH WORLD CONGRESS ON SNOW, MOUNTAIN AND WELLNESS TOURISM
MOUNTAINLIKERS: "Sustainability and wellbeing, the keys to mountain tourism"
20-22 March 2024, ANDORRA

Background and justification

Tourism is one of the strategic economic sectors of many countries, with a significant percentage of GDP and millions of jobs depending of it. For Andorra, tourism accounts for 50% of GDP and in Europe the median is 10%.

According to UN Tourism, international tourism recovered 84% of pre-pandemic levels in the January-July 2023 period (-16% versus 2019) after a strong second quarter and the first part of the northern hemisphere summer season. Travel demand continued to show remarkable resilience and sustained recovery, amid economic and geopolitical challenges. These results show that international tourism remains on track to reach between 80% and 95% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023.

Andorra and UN Tourism Academy are working intensively to grow training and education in different areas of tourism. Snow and mountain tourism, as well as wellness tourism, are sectors that allow sustainable development, the conservation of biodiversity and the generation of employment and wealth in rural and mountain areas.

Andorra actively collaborates to ensure that tourism in mountain areas is seen as a lever for destinations in order to advance faster and better by serving as an engine of economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability. However, Andorra, as well as other mountain tourist destinations, also face major challenges, such as climate change, global competition, seasonality, and adapting to new traveller demands and expectations. For this reason, a new perspective is necessary, which allows us to innovate, diversify and improve the quality and competitiveness of our tourism offer.

Reflecting these new trends, the Congress is back in its latest edition including the term wellness, thus becoming the **WORLD CONGRESS OF SNOW, MOUNTAIN AND WELLNESS TOURISM**.

In this edition, where we will naturally address mountain tourism, the aim is to define and specify the future axes of development of snow, mountain and wellness tourism.

To ensure the growth of the tourism sector, the following issues need to be discussed today:

- Sustainability as a cornerstone for the development of the tourism sector
- Tourism diversification and emerging tourism products that drive the tourism of the future, in line with the new demands of travellers (nature, health, well-being, etc.)
- New technologies, AI applied to the tourism sector, digitalization
- Education and training



Provisional programme

Wednesday, 20 March 2024

[Venue: Andorra la Vella Congress Centre - Plaça del Poble, Andorra](#)

- 08:00 – 09:30 **Arrival and registration of participants**
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Opening Ceremony**
- **Hon. Mrs. Laura Mas Barrionuevo**, Mayor of Encamp
 - **Mrs. Natalia Bayona**, Executive Director, UN Tourism
 - **H.E. Mr. Xavier Espot Zamora**, Prime Minister, Principality of Andorra
- Master of Ceremonies: **Gemma Rial**, deputy general manager of RTVA (Radio y Televisión de Andorra)
- 10:30 – 10:45 **Setting the scene - Our marvellous mountains: Opportunities and challenges** by **Alice Morrison**, Adventurer, TV Presenter and Author
- 10:45 – 11:45 **HIGH-LEVEL PANEL: How to promote diverse and immersive experiences with high added value in mountain destinations. How to develop policies that promote innovation, diversification and sustainability.**
- In order to promote immersive experiences in mountain territories with high added value, it is important to take into account the conservation of mountain areas as an unavoidable objective in nature conservation and development policies, as they constitute one of the most characteristic features of these destinations, of the ecological processes and economic development that confer their identity.*
- Sustainable development is critical to ensuring that these immersive experiences are beneficial to both visitors and local communities.*
- Moderator: Natalia Bayona**, Executive Director, UN Tourism
- Speakers:
- **H.E. Mr. Jordi Torres Falcó**, Minister of Tourism and Trade of Andorra
 - **H.E. Mrs. Rosana Morillo Rodríguez**, Secretary of State for Tourism of Spain
 - **Mrs. Alessandra Priante**, President of the National Tourism Agency (ENIT) of Italy
- 11:45 – 12:15 Coffee break
- 12:15 – 12:30 **Presentation of UN Tourism Report: Understanding and quantifying mountain tourism**
- **Michel Julian**, Senior Programme Officer, UN Tourism
 - **Enric Martinez**, Director, Pas Grau Internacional (Andorra)

12:30 – 13:00

Entering the world of wellness.

Conversation with **Csilla Mezösi**, Secretary General, European Spas Association, moderated by **Michel Julian**, Senior Programme Officer, UN Tourism

13:00 – 15:00

Free time for lunch

15:00– 16:30

SESSION 1 – HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOURISM

Health and wellness tourism is a growing trend in tourism: the emergence of concepts such as "selfness", finding meaning in life / finding oneself, spirituality and integrative aspects of well-being in general as one of the benefits sought in personal life. This type of tourism is no stranger to new trends: alternative therapies, eco-nutrition, mindfulness as a product and the appreciation of natural products.

Health and wellness tourism is a future trend for mountain territories, and it is necessary to know how it adds value to the experience that the visitor seeks.

Moderator: Judit Hidalgo, Directora de Andorra Business

Setting the scene: Carlos Cendra, Director of Marketing and Communication, Mabrian (Spain)

Speakers:

- **David Astrié**, Director of Iconic Andorra
- **Athina Babakou**, Director of Strategic Planning, Ministry of Tourism of Greece
- **Emma Haefeli**, Director of Marketing and PR, CHENOT GROUP (Switzerland)
- **Carlos Cendra**, Director of Marketing and Communication, Mabrian (Spain)

16:30 – 17:00

Health Tourism – In conversation with:

- **László Puczko**, Director General, Health Tourism Worldwide (Hungary)
- **Joan Muro**, President of the Health Tourism Association of Andorra Health Destination (Andorra)

End of Day 1

Thursday, 21 March 2024

[Venue: Andorra la Vella Congress Centre - Plaça del Poble, Andorra](#)

09:30 – 10:00

Sharing is Caring

Sandra Carvao, Director of Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, UN Tourism

10:00 – 11:15

SESSION 2 – HOW TO BOOST THE GROWTH OF PREMIUM TOURISM IN MOUNTAIN AREAS ALL YEAR ROUND

How can a mountain destination differentiate and position itself as an exclusive, quality location with personalized services to attract a segment with high purchasing power?

Differentiating and positioning a mountain destination to attract a segment with high purchasing power can be a challenge, so it is necessary to reflect on some strategies such as offering personalized services and unique experiences; promoting sustainable and respectful practices to differentiate the destination, and creating tourism activity all year round. Improving local infrastructure and quality tourism establishments is especially important to help position the destination as a quality location. Architecture is a key factor in the premium mountain offering. Building on the mountain is a challenge, but also an opportunity to create impressive architectural works that blend in with the natural surroundings and offer panoramic views.

Moderator and introduction: Betim Budzaku, CEO of Andorra Turismo

Speakers:

- **Hermann Fercher**, Director General of Lech Zürs Tourism (Austria)
- **Caroline Couret**, CEO of Creative Tourism Network (Spain)
- **Daniel Soucaze**, General Manager, Pic du Midi (France)
- **Carne Vidales Molina**, Expert on initiatives, businesses and gastronomy (Spain)

11:15 – 11:45

Coffee break

11:45 – 13:00

SESSION 3: EMERGING TOURISM PRODUCTS: A TRENDY PHENOMENON OR A STRUCTURAL CHANGE?

How can mountain tourism offerings be created and diversified by incorporating activities, experiences and services that respond to new market demands and trends?

Emerging tourism products are those that offer new experiences, destinations or formats to the tourism market, taking advantage of the natural, cultural or anthropic resources of a place. These products are characterized by their innovation, differentiation and adaptation to the demands and preferences of travellers. Some examples of emerging tourism products such as rural tourism, with the integration of uncommon accommodations, regenerative tourism whereby the visitor seeks to improve and restore the ecosystems, communities and cultures of the destinations being visited, among many others such as adventure tourism, culture, gastronomy, etc.

Moderator: Michel Julian, Senior Programme Officer, UN Tourism

Speakers:

- **Peter Mall**, Director and Coordinator of St. Anton Village (Austria), Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism 2023
- **Domitien Detrie**, Director General of l'Agence des Pyrénées
- **Jordi Serracanta**, Councilor on Tourism and Sports of Ordino (Andorra), Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism 2023

13:00 – 15:00

Free time for lunch

15:00 – 15:45

Get inspired: Sustainability is the way.

Moderator: Gottfried Bachler, President of Slow Food Carinthia (Austria)

Speakers:

- **Mattia Storni**, Director, Marketing and Communications, Saas-Fee Tourism Board (Switzerland), Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism 2021
- **Sarisher Mann**, Founder of Sustainable Alpine Tourism Initiative (United Kingdom)

15:45 – 16:45

SESSION 4: EDUCATION AND TRAINING: How to prepare the human team for change. How will technology affect the hiring of labour? A new path to new labour regulations?

How can learning and professional development opportunities be offered to workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, especially on topics related to sustainability, climate change and innovation?

The conception of work has changed on the part of the worker since the development of hyperconnectivity, teleworking, and the challenges faced by the employer to achieve an engaged, resilient, qualified workforce that is faithful to the company's values.

Training, the involvement of the company in environmental and sustainable challenges, and social-corporate responsibility are becoming increasingly important for workers, as the future of work implies structural changes at the governmental and business level.

Moderator: Sonia Figueras, Programme Manager, UN Tourism Academy

Speakers:

- **Franklin Carpenter**, Director of Tourism Advisory, Horwath HTL (Spain)
- **María Abellanet**, President, CETT Barcelona (Spain)
- **David Hailstones**, Senior Vice President & Chief Operations Officer, Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education (Switzerland)

16:45 – 17:15

Presentation: *Andorra al natural*, the environment where ideas germinate.

Javier Corso, Explorer of National Geographic

17:15 – 17:45

Closing Ceremony

- **Hon. Mrs. Laura Mas Barrionuevo**, Mayor of Encamp
- **Hon. Mrs. Maria del Mar Coma**, Mayor of Ordino, host of the Congress in 2026
- **Mrs. Natalia Bayona**, Executive Director, UN Tourism
- **H.E. Mr. Jordi Torres Falcó**, Minister of Tourism and Trade of Andorra

Friday, 22 March 2024

09:00 – 18:00

Enjoy Andorra! Technical and recreational visit to Encamp

Sponsored by:

