

Subject: Fwd: seminar online Voices from the Ground - joi 31 iulie2025

Stimati colaboratori,

Echipa Best Tourism Villages/UN Tourism va organiza seria de seminarii online **Village Talks – Voices from the Ground**, seminarul din 31 iulie, ora 14-15.30 ora RO, avand tema **“Tourism for Nature: Conserving Natural Resources through Sustainable Rural Development”** .

In cadrul seminarului vor prezenta , doamna **Ms. Kirsi Hyvaerinen**, expert UN Tourism precum și reprezentanti din cadrul Best Tourism Villages: **Sauris Zahre (Italy)**, **Pissouri (Cyprus)**, and **Mindo (Ecuador)**.

Atasat este agenda provizorie si alte informatii utile.

Inregistrarea se efectueaza la acest link: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Cu stima,

Iulia Dăngulea

consilier/counsellor

Serviciul Marketing și Reprezentare/ Office for Marketing and Representation

Ministerul Economiei, Digitalizării, Antreprenoriatului și Turismului/

Ministry of Economy, Digitalization, Entrepreneurship and Tourism

Bucharest/Romania

www.turism.gov.ro,

www.economie.gov.ro,

www.romania.travel

Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism Network

Online Activities

Technical Note

1. Registration

The BTV Network activities are held online and hosted on the Zoom platform. All participants are kindly requested to register at the link provided via email prior to each session.

2. Connection

On the day of the session, each participant will directly connect to the meeting through the Zoom link and credentials received after registration. Please establish the connection **well in advance** to test your audio and video and avoid connectivity issues.

Please note that the session time is indicated in Central European Summer Time.

When entering the platform to connect to the session, it is essential that you put your **LAST NAME/VILLAGE** in Latin alphabet so that we can identify you.

3. Technical Requirements

To ensure an enjoyable meeting experience, please make sure the following technical requirements are met:

- A wired, internet connected computer, laptop or web-enabled device;
- An external or built-in camera, well positioned to show your face;
- An external or built-in microphone;
- 600 kbps / 1.2 Mbps (upload / download) internet speed.

4. Ground rules for participants

For a smooth and fruitful session, please note that:

- You should test your headphones and microphone **before** you enter the meeting;
- All participants will access in silence by default. Keep your microphone muted and camera on when not addressing the meeting. When you are invited to speak, please unmute your microphone. Please, manage your speaking time well;
- Below the screen, there is a section to write your questions: “Q&A”. Also, there is a “Chat” box for you to make comments, ask questions, and communicate with the speakers or the other participants;
- If you wish to make an intervention, please signal by using the chat function, or “Raise hand” function.

If you encounter technical problems during the meetings, please contact rural@unwto.org for assistance.

Please, be informed that the sessions will be **recorded**.

Thank you.

Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism Network

Village Talks *Voices from the Ground*

Tourism for Nature: Conserving Natural Resources through Sustainable Rural Development

Thursday, 31 July 2025

13:00-14:30 (CEST) – Zoom online meeting

Programme

Chair: Ms. Federica Iellici, Programme Officer, Tourism for Rural Development Programme, UN Tourism

13:00 – 13:05 Welcome Remarks

Mr. Jost Neumann, Coordinator, Tourism for Rural Development Programme, UN Tourism

13:05 – 13:15 Keynote Speech

Ms. Kirsi Hyvaerinen, UN Tourism Expert

13:15 – 13:35 Growing Tourism through Mountain Stewardship

Sauris Zahre, Italy

Ms. Fabiana Gorassini, Head of Tourist Information Office, Municipality of Sauris Zahre

13:35 – 13:55 Driving Sustainability in Coastal Tourism

Pissouri, Cyprus

Ms. Carol Bailey, Village Representative, Pissouri

13:55 – 14:15 Nature-Based Tourism for Conservation

Mindo, Ecuador

Mr. Fernando Arias, President, GAD Parroquial de Mindo

14:15 – 14:30 Q&A

Closing Remarks

Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism Network

Village Talks *Voices from the Ground*

Tourism for Nature: Conserving Natural Resources through Sustainable Rural Development

31 July 2025

13:00 – 14:30 CEST

The conservation of natural resources is vital to the resilience and sustainability of rural areas. Forests, wetlands, water sources, and coastal ecosystems are not only environmental assets. They are the foundation of local livelihoods, cultural identity, and the tourism experience. When managed responsibly, tourism can contribute directly to the preservation of these resources by generating income, creating incentives for protection, and raising awareness among both visitors and local communities.

However, the relationship between tourism and nature conservation must be carefully managed. Unregulated visitation, infrastructure pressure, and insufficient reinvestment in conservation can lead to degradation of ecosystems. Sustainable rural tourism requires clear environmental policies, strong community involvement, effective visitor management, and models of tourism that respect ecological limits. In turn, well-preserved natural resources enhance the attractiveness of rural destinations, contributing to long-term tourism value.

This webinar is part of the Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism Network **Village Talks series**, providing a platform for communities to share their experiences and good practices in leveraging tourism as a tool for sustainable rural development. Each session is organized around specific themes, with Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism presenting their experiences in overcoming challenges, seizing opportunities, and offering practical examples of successful tourism development initiatives and lessons learned.

Keynote Speaker: Kirsi Hyvaerinen – UN Tourism expert

Bio

Kirsi, a Balkans-adopted Finnish consultant and educator, specialises in responsible destination management and SME development. With over 30 years of experience in various roles in travel and tourism management and marketing, she is dedicated to helping people and places “keep their promises” focusing on countries and regions in transformation. She advises governments, international organisations, businesses and NGOs, supporting initiatives in ecotourism, rural tourism, and adventure travel. As the founder of HYVÄ Coaching & Consulting and co-founder of the Balkan Green initiative, Kirsi works hands-on with organisations across Europe and beyond, including as a

Trained B Leader of B Corp, and certified Coach and Auditor for Green Destinations and Travelife for Tour Operators. Known for her strategic mindset and collaborative spirit, Kirsi fosters meaningful connections for lasting positive impacts through tailored mentoring and consulting.

Since 2022, Ms. Hyvaerinen has been collaborating with UN Tourism as a mentor for the Best Tourism Villages Upgrade Programme, providing customized mentoring to selected villages in identifying weaknesses and proposing practical solutions to overcome challenges and enhance overall sustainable tourism development.

Keynotes:

- How tourism can become a driving force for nature conservation in rural areas
- How conservation strengthens the quality, appeal, and long-term resilience of tourism
- How to place nature at the center of tourism planning, experience design, and governance
- How grassroots action and local ownership shape successful conservation efforts
- How ancestral and traditional practices offer forward-looking models for living in balance with nature

Speakers

Sauris Zahre, Italy

Nestled in the Carnic Alps, Sauris is a mountain village renowned for its rich forest landscapes, traditional land-use practices, and sustainable architecture. The community has long embraced the stewardship of its natural environment, preserving ancient forests and alpine ecosystems while maintaining centuries-old agricultural and forestry traditions. Sauris offers nature-based tourism experiences such as hiking, eco-friendly accommodations, and local gastronomy deeply connected to its natural surroundings and cultural heritage.

Presentation focus: How Sauris conserves its forest and mountain ecosystems through traditional land use and sustainable practices, and how tourism activities are thoughtfully integrated to promote environmental awareness, support conservation efforts, and sustain community livelihoods.

Pissouri, Cyprus

Located on the Mediterranean coast, Pissouri has adopted sustainable tourism practices to protect its marine and coastal ecosystems. With Blue Flag-certified beaches, wastewater reuse systems, and land-use planning to avoid overdevelopment, the village ensures that tourism does not compromise its fragile environment.

Presentation focus: How Pissouri manages coastal tourism to support marine conservation, and the ways in which sustainability standards and visitor awareness initiatives enhance the tourism experience and environmental resilience.

Mindo, Ecuador

Located in the Andean Chocó, one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots, Mindo is a community that has embraced birdwatching and nature-based tourism as tools for conservation. Surrounded by lush cloud forest, the village integrates environmental education and biodiversity protection into its tourism offerings. Through guided birdwatching experiences, community forest initiatives, and local conservation partnerships, Mindo demonstrates how tourism can help preserve fragile ecosystems while supporting sustainable rural livelihoods.

Presentation focus: How Mindo leverages birdwatching and cloud forest tourism to support conservation of the Andean Chocó ecosystem, including the role of community guides, private reserves, and environmental education in raising awareness and generating income for local forest protection and biodiversity initiatives.