

Finalists of the Start-Up Innovation Camp announced

Lucerne, 11th March 2021 – **World Tourism Forum Lucerne (WTFL)** has in recent years worked on bringing together talented young founders and investors, as well as enabling important decision-makers to access a unique network of start-ups. This year is no exception, and WTFL appealed to the tourism-related start-up scene to apply for the Start-Up Innovation Camp at the end of April. From over 400 applications received from more than 90 countries, 15 finalists were chosen. During the digital Start-Up Innovation Camp, they will receive exclusive input and coaching from industry experts and the unique opportunity to pitch their business model to interested investors. The recently developed Dealflow Tool will allow start-ups and investors to be matched even more easily in the future.

Last November, World Tourism Forum Lucerne launched a call to the founders of tourism-related start-ups around the world inviting them to apply to this year's Start-Up Innovation Camp. Over 400 applications were received from more than 90 countries, covering a broad spectrum ranging from digital solutions and gastro-guides to mattress rental. The scale of innovation and creativity is vast. This proves that innovative spirit is alive and well, despite the ongoing global pandemic. That's why it is more important than ever to connect the driving forces behind it with established sources of knowledge and expertise, in order to shape the future of tourism together.

Start-ups benefit from exclusive expert knowledge

From all applicants, three finalists were selected from each of the five categories «Recovering» (Covid-19), «Living» (Hospitality), «Exploring» (Mobility & Destination), «Savoring» (Gastronomy), «Impacting» (Social Impact & Sustainability). At the end of April, the finalists will receive the golden opportunity to spend four days interacting with experts and investors.

The WTFL Start-Up Innovation Camp will be a digital event and is part of the Innovation Camp taking place this year in Andermatt, Switzerland. The Innovation Camp has been made possible thanks to the support of its Innovation Partners *Accenture*, *Les Roches*, *Innosuisse* and its Start-Up Partners *TTC*, *Lakestar* and *Hapimag*. As Innovation Partner, *Accenture* will give the finalists valuable input about relevant topics, such as strategy and funding. Furthermore, *Accenture* will offer guidance to participants, together with the other partners, via individual coaching sessions. On the final day, the start-ups will pitch their business model in front of investors and a jury of experts. The winning teams from the five categories will each receive a cash prize of 5000 Swiss Francs.

The new Dealflow Tool makes it even easier for start-ups to connect with investors

In its continual search for start-ups with novel and promising concepts for the tourism industry, WTFL has held many regional, national and international Start-Up Innovation Camps since 2015. Over the years, WTFL has therefore built up a unique network of start-ups. The Innovation Camps are based on the four cornerstones: «business optimization», «business expansion», «pitching» and «networking», and provide the participants a valuable opportunity to connect with investors.

WTFL is convinced that innovative business models, agile thinking and strong partnerships positively influence the future of the entire tourism industry. Both sides benefit from a mutual exchange of ideas between established and fledgling businesses. However, WTFL doesn't just match start-ups with potential investors, it also gives a voice to small businesses that want to actively shape the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. To further enable these connections outside of the Innovation Camps themselves, WTFL has been working on the development of a new Dealflow Tool for the past two years (see box).

Dealflow Tool

The Dealflow Tool connects the world's best start-ups with the right investors. The new digital platform is an extension of the overall WTFL concept, which for over 10 years has offered international start-ups, experts and investors a platform for the exchange of ideas. Used in partnership with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the tool can also benefit tourism destinations, enabling them to create, support and foster a start-up community that brings in new, future-oriented and disruptive ideas.

Start-Up Innovation Camp

Since 2015, WTFL has been organizing regional, national and international Start-Up Innovation Camps. In them, tourism-related start-ups are invited to an event lasting several days, where they can participate in workshops, benefit from expert-led coaching sessions on various subjects, and network with investors. This year's Start-Up Innovation Camp will be held purely digitally.

Find out more about the 15 finalists at innovation2021-results.wtflucerne.org

Innovation Festival

At the inaugural hybrid Innovation Festival leading personalities from the tourism industry and politics, as well as investors and start-ups will come together at the end of April to discuss the brightest new approaches. World Tourism Forum Lucerne is closely observing the pandemic situation and reserves the right to make changes to the date and programme.

Find out more about the Innovation Festival 2021 at festival2021.wtflucerne.org

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