



Press Release

Madrid, Spain, 4 April 2017

PR. N° 17040

The Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Sonoma, California, becomes the 17th member of the UNWTO International Network

Located in California (USA), the Sonoma County Sustainable Tourism Observatory is the latest member having successfully joined the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO). This comes in a very unique momentum as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development is being celebrated worldwide.

UNWTO has welcomed the incorporation of the Sustainable Tourism Observatory of the Sonoma County, in California, to the International Network of Tourism Observatories (INSTO). The observatory is the first of its kind under the umbrella of the Coalition to Observe and Advance Sustainable Tourism (COAST), aiming to serve as an anchor for a possible network of Pacific Coast observatories, connecting key tourism destinations along the Pacific Coast of North America, stretching from San Francisco and the Channel Islands in the south to Vancouver and Victoria BC in the north.

“We highly welcome the incorporation of the Tourism Observatory of the Sonoma County as a new member of the Network and we are sure that it will help us to achieve the mission of this platform throughout 2017 and beyond,” said UNWTO Secretary General Taleb Rifai.

The Observatory of the Sonoma County is strategically based 45 minutes North of the Golden Gate Bridge and the metropolitan areas of San Francisco and Silicon Valley. Due to its proximity to major innovation hubs and its abundant variety of culinary and scenic attractions, the area attracts millions of visitors every year.

The new member will focus on areas such as the scarcity of water, the impacts of agricultural-tourism growth in a complex and sensitive environment, climate change responsiveness and resilience, the viable regeneration of essential public places such as state parks, employment and local living opportunities, among others.

The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development prominently features the need for evidence-driven development of tourism that is based on participatory, inclusive and timely monitoring exercises.

"We're honored to be included in the roster of INSTO Observatories. It is our aim to share the best practices which have been developed over the past 40+ years of conservation awareness in Sonoma County, which help drive the flourishing tourism industry here. Thanks to our premier position as a wine destination we have much to document but also much to learn," said Pamela Lanier, Founder of COAST and Chair of the Sonoma Sustainable Tourism Observatory

"We are delighted that Sonoma County Observatory has been approved by the UNWTO and will join the Blue Community Observatory in Florida in the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories. These institutions are expected to play an important role in adding to the global body of knowledge in sustainable tourism," commented Isabel Hill, Director of the National Travel and Tourism Office at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Additional information:

[About the UNWTO Network of Observatories](#)

[About the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development](#)

Contacts:

UNWTO Media Officer Rut Gomez Sobrino

Tel: (+34) 91 567 81 60 / rgomez@unwto.org

UNWTO Communications & Publications Programme

Tel: (+34) 91 567 8100 / Fax: +34 91 567 8218 / comm@UNWTO.org

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 know-how. Its membership includes 156 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Flickr](#).