



Introducing our shortlist for the Gender Equality Champion of the Year Award 2023

The Gender Equality Champion Award for the tourism and hospitality sector will be presented at ITB Berlin on 8th March, International Women's Day. Applications for the Award have now closed and our team has whittled down over 40 applicants to four shortlisters.

The shortlist includes businesses that are based across three continents:

[ETUR \(https://linktr.ee/eturviajes\)](https://linktr.ee/eturviajes) – Ecuador

[Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board \(https://www.mptourism.com/\)](https://www.mptourism.com/) – India

[AdventureWomen \(https://www.adventurewomen.com/\)](https://www.adventurewomen.com/) – USA

[Travel Excellence \(https://www.travelexcellence.com/\)](https://www.travelexcellence.com/) – Costa Rica

[ETUR \(https://linktr.ee/eturviajes\)](https://linktr.ee/eturviajes)

For employees of this tourism operator based in Ecuador, all staff are provided with gender awareness training, with a particular focus on employability challenges for women in the sector, and how certain work conditions or behaviours may violate the rights of working women. Employees are also able to request flexible working hours to assist with family responsibilities, and can also have the option to bring children into the workplace following approval from supervisors.

ETUR promotes gender equality through concrete actions within their tourism operations. Their first complete travel programme, which launches this year, will focus on travel for women within Ecuador. An example of this is “Guayaquil de mis calores”, a tour of craft beers in the city of Guayaquil, Ecuador, exclusive only for women, which offers a new space for learning and safety in beer tasting. This disrupts the exclusionary traditions around the participation of women in the beer industry, breaking down social stigmas.

ETUR also provides travellers the opportunity to contribute socioeconomically to communities and businesses led by women. Clients are made aware first-hand of the participation of women in the value chain.

[Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board \(https://www.mptourism.com/\)](https://www.mptourism.com/)

The MP Tourism Board is responsible for increasing tourism and tourist facilities in the state. A Responsible Tourism Mission has been launched to ensure that there is economic improvement and environmental protection in the area, so that locals can live in better conditions as a result of tourism.

Of the many projects they have implemented, women are at the core, with preference given to local women. Female members of the family who are involved in MP Tourism Board's Rural Tourism Project are given credit, recognition, and ownership of their work, which ultimately increases their status in society. Furthermore, the Safe Tourism Destinations for Women that the board are involved in is ensuring that Madhya Pradesh is a safe tourist destination for solo, female travellers.

The MP Tourism Board has shown active effort in their mission to ensure that the state is a welcoming place for female tourists and that tourism as an industry within the area benefits the lives of local women.

Adventurewomen (<https://www.adventurewomen.com/>)

This is a U.S based tourism operator that is designed for women who are hoping to travel internationally, set up and run by an all-woman team.

Notably, they provide in-person annual training where staff role play different types of emergency/crisis situations from the perspective of female guests and the female Ambassadors that accompany each of their trips.

Benefits for their team include a hybrid and flexible working model, with unlimited holidays, and parental leave in excess of the laws requirement (in United States).

Their trips always prioritise female guides, and all trips are accompanied by a female AdventureWomen Ambassador. One interaction with a local woman on all trips is also included, which helps to promote an understanding and connection with women living in other cultures and helps to give back to the local communities.

Travel Excellence (<https://www.travelexcellence.com/>)

Travel Excellence were the first company in Costa Rica to be certified in Gender Equality, being a medium-sized company with national capital and from the tourism sector, they are trying to advance at a faster pace on the issue of equality than others in the sectors.

The tour operator has a Gender Policy that is publicly available and also a Gender Policy Officer responsible for implementing the policy among the company. Gender Awareness training is provided for all employees, as well as a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment.

Increased paternal leave is also available for those working within the organisation, which is something we value, as the responsibility of parental care for a newborn should not fall solely to mothers.

The winner will be presented with the Award at ITB Berlin 2023 on the 8th March, International Women's Day.

This year's award is sponsored by The Sustainable Hospitality Alliance.

The Alliance drives collaborative action to enable the hospitality industry to have a lasting positive impact on the planet and its people. By working with CEOs and C-suite representatives from across the hospitality industry, alongside strategic partners, they are able to implement strategic action worldwide to create a prosperous and responsible hospitality sector that gives back to the destination more than it takes.

Their members have a reach of 7 million rooms and include world-leading hotel companies well as regional brands. Their network also includes other parts of the hospitality value chain, including owners, investors and suppliers, to further drive joined up action on sustainability, and accelerate the industry on the path to net positive hospitality.

Find out more about the work that they do: <https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org>

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