

PRESS RELEASE

THE IBEROSTAR FOUNDATION AND PLANETERRA JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY TOURISM AT DESTINATIONS WITH IBEROSTAR HOTELS

- *The agreement aims to contribute to the social and economic development of the local communities where Iberostar is present by 2030.*
- *36 community-based tourism projects will be implemented in the coming years, providing more than 955,000 potential travelers with community tourism experiences, involving 35 communities and improving over 13,000 lives.*
- *The first three projects have already been implemented in Mexico and the Dominican Republic and the hotel company plans to expand this initiative to the rest of the destinations where it operates throughout this decade.*



Palma de Mallorca, September 6th, 2023 - Iberostar Group, through the **Iberostar Foundation**, has joined forces with Planeterra, an impact-driven non-profit using tourism to uplift communities, launching an ambitious program to promote **community tourism initiatives** at destinations where the Spanish hotel group is present, in order to boost the social and economic development of the local communities in which it operates and protect their ecosystems.

Through this partnership, Iberostar and Planeterra have set themselves ambitious goals: to provide more than **955,000 potential travelers** with community tourism experiences, **involve 35 communities**, improve over **13,000 lives** and implement **36 projects** in the coming years.

This initiative, which establishes Iberostar as an international leader in responsible tourism for its care of the environment and people, has been piloted **in Mexico and the Dominican Republic where Iberostar has 18 hotels and resorts**. Iberostar Group plans to extend this pioneering project to all regions where Iberostar hotels are present by 2030.

According to **Alejandro Borrás, Head of the Iberostar Foundation**, *"as part of our commitment to generate a positive impact on the lives of people and their environment through responsible tourism, it is essential to support and involve local communities, making them active participants and thus contribute to improving the living conditions of the people who are part of them. In this way, the alliance with Planeterra allows us to contribute to their empowerment and integrate them into the value chain of the tourism sector."*

"This partnership with Iberostar is a shining example that inspires the entire travel and hospitality industry", said Jamie Sweeting, President of Planeterra. "While major hotel chains have yet to embrace the integration of local communities, this project stands out for its true impact. With the potential to replicate this model across 16 countries and 100 hotel properties, Iberostar has the power to transform countless communities. Just imagine the extraordinary positive impact that could be achieved if other hotel chains were to follow and adopt this transformative approach."

Conservation of cenotes in the Caribbean

Iberostar has launched its first community tourism project in Mexico, where it operates 11 hotels located in Cancun, Cozumel, Riviera Maya and Riviera Nayarit. The project takes place in the Caribbean community of Chemuyil, in Quintana Roo. It is facilitated through the Bejil-Ha Riviera Maya cooperative society, was originally established by seven passionate locals committed to conserving over **50 cenotes in the area, as well as protecting the native flora and fauna** of the Yucatan Peninsula.

This initiative, **which was fully developed in close proximity to the hotels, benefits more than 30 local families** and promotes awareness and conservation of the territory. It does so by offering exclusive itineraries, away from the typical tourist routes, and invites guests to explore the community and its natural surroundings under the guidance of knowledgeable local guides. Excursions include bike rides, visits to the cenotes, and a local gastronomy experience.

Crafts and cocoa processing in the Dominican Republic

In order to integrate community tourism experiences in the hotel sector, the Iberostar Foundation and Planeterra have developed a model to promote these actions both inside and outside its resorts. One such example is the **Iberostar Costa Dorada hotel in the Dominican Republic**, which has been hosting two associations at its premises to offer resort guests a weekly immersive tourism experience with the local community.

Within the hotel, guests have the opportunity to learn about the process of growing cocoa and making chocolate thanks to the Chocal cooperative –driven by thirty local women from Altamira, Puerto Plata– whose **project helps more than 200 farmers and their families**.

Also, through the artisans of the Petrified Wood Association (Asoartep), from the town of Imbert and Puerto Plata, hotel guests will be able to witness, interact with and learn about the local wood carving techniques, an activity that **benefits more than 250 families in the community**.

Thanks to these initiatives, Iberostar guests can purchase products and handicrafts from the local communities where Iberostar operates, which are usually outside the conventional tourist circuits. This in turn raises awareness among visitors regarding the protection, conservation, and promotion of the local economy.

Iberostar's partnership with Planeterra is changing the game by proving that major hotel chains can make a difference and use tourism as a **catalyst to promote community-wellbeing while protecting the environment, and celebrating culture and traditions.**

Note to editor: You can access photos [here](#)

About Iberostar Group

Iberostar Group is a 100% family-owned Spanish multinational company that boasts over 65 years' experience in the tourism industry and business origins dating back to 1877. Its main line of business is **Iberostar Hotels & Resorts**, whose portfolio includes over 100 four and five-star hotels in 16 countries, including the hotels under the Iberostar Beachfront Resorts brand*. The Group has become an international benchmark by promoting a responsible tourism business model focused on caring for people and the environment. The [Wave of Change](#) movement, a pioneering and innovative initiative from Iberostar, reflects the company's specific commitment to the environment and oceans, and its efforts to promote these concerns to society as a whole. With sustainability as the driving force and lever behind the business, the company places the circular economy at the center of its strategy and is working on its own [2030 Agenda](#) to be waste-free by 2025, carbon-neutral by 2030, 100% responsible in its seafood supply chain by 2025, and to improve the health of the ecosystems that surround its hotels, among other goals. Iberostar Group has a global team with more than 30,000 people of 95 nationalities. Thanks to this pool of talent, the company is a leader in quality and boosts differentiation in the customer experience through constant product innovation and digital commitment.

**The portfolio of Iberostar Beachfront Resorts exclude Iberostar's interests in Cuba.*

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About Planeterra

Planeterra is the world's leading nonprofit organization using tourism to uplift communities. Planeterra helps local organizations and communities use tourism as a catalyst to improve people's lives, protect their natural environments, and celebrate their culture. Put simply, it is a better kind of tourism - improving the lives of community members as they provide travellers with better experiences. Planeterra is more than just an agent of change and driver of communal well-being, they are tested and trusted builders uplifting communities through tourism. For more information please visit <https://planeterra.org/>

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