

**ETENA.**

**Empowering  
Tourism  
Ecosystems**

**North Africa**

An initiative by TUI Care Foundation and enpact

# Empowering the Future Shapers of Rural Tourism in Egypt

**ETENA Incubator  
Cycle 2**

**Challenges &  
Eligibility Criteria**

An initiative by



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# ETENA Incubator: Empowering the Future Shapers of Rural Tourism in Egypt

## 1. Programme Description

Launched by TUI Care Foundation and enpact, the Empowering Tourism Ecosystems in North Africa (ETENA) programme focuses on supporting 100 aspiring entrepreneurs and 10 startup founders in tourism and tourism supply chains across Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, providing them with tailored business development support and financial backing opportunities.

The purpose is to help them develop innovative solutions that can promote local experiences, drive job creation, and by extension, create inclusive social impact.

The programme comprises four phases of key activities: **Idea Marathon, 2-month Pre-incubator, 6-month Incubator**, and a regional **3-month Accelerator**.

ETENA Incubator aims to empower **4 teams of innovative entrepreneurs in Egypt**, who are working on prototypes of tourism solutions; Throughout 6 months, each team will receive **tailored business development support, dedicated mentoring**, along with **direct financial support of 500 Euros per month**, and **permanent access to workstations at the enpact hub in Zamalek**.

## 2. Project Focus: Community-Centric & Inclusive Rural Tourism Innovations

### Background information and context

Rural tourism remains an underexplored opportunity in Egypt, despite the richness of its cultural and natural heritage. While rural areas are home to over half of the population, they often fall off the tourism map, leaving untapped potential for both travellers and communities.

Enhancing rural tourism experiences through innovation can create meaningful connections between visitors and locals, whether by supporting traditional crafts or building sustainable food systems and community-led services. When thoughtfully developed, rural tourism won't just diversify the travel experience; it will directly contribute to local livelihoods, empower small businesses, and help promote Egypt's rural identity.

### Where you can make a difference

Early-stage startups and entrepreneurs are invited to apply for the ETENA Incubator to develop **creative, community-rooted solutions that strengthen rural tourism in Egypt**. The goal is to empower rural communities by fostering authentic, respectful interactions between travellers and locals.

Participants are encouraged to propose prototyped solutions that highlight Egypt's rich cultural and natural heritage in rural areas, ensure accessibility and inclusion for all travellers, and help channel tourism revenue directly into these communities, supporting local livelihoods, preserving traditions, and promoting sustainable development.

## **Suggested Areas For Innovation:**

Your tourism solution can tap into one of the following focus areas:

- **Authentic Cultural Experiences**
  - Platforms or services that connect travellers with local artisans, storytellers, musicians, or culinary experiences.
  - Farm stays, handicraft workshops, or cultural exchange programs in rural communities.
- **Inclusive Tourism Infrastructure**
  - Solutions that improve physical and accessibility in rural destinations for persons with disabilities and elderly travellers.
  - Development of inclusive guides, signage, or assistive mobile tools tailored for diverse needs.
- **Local Capacity Building**
  - Training and upskilling programs for rural community members in hospitality, tour guiding, digital marketing, or guest relations.
  - Entrepreneurship support tools for local tourism providers.
- **Community-driven Platforms**
  - Marketplaces that allow rural communities to directly offer and manage bookings for accommodations, tours, and experiences.
  - Transparency-focused platforms ensure fair revenue sharing.
  - Platforms or apps that enable locals to design and lead personalised tours, workshops, or homestays, ensuring fair revenue distribution and authentic cultural exchanges.

- **Sustainable Revenue Models**
  - Tools like cooperative marketplaces that guarantee transparent profit-sharing, helping local providers retain a larger portion of tourism earnings.
- **Eco-Tourism & Nature-Based Activities**
  - Guided outdoor experiences like hiking, birdwatching, stargazing, or eco-lodging with community involvement.
  - Conservation-linked tourism, where travellers contribute to environmental preservation.

### 3. Eligibility Criteria

ETENA's second phase - the 6-month incubator - is designed for teams of aspiring entrepreneurs **who have developed prototypes for products or services that address the aforementioned focus challenge**, directly or indirectly, and have the potential to contribute to the transformation of rural tourism in Egypt.

#### **To qualify for the ETENA incubator, your team should:**

- consist of three members,
- be gender-balanced or woman-led,
- demonstrate a strong technical foundation and ability to MVP your proposed solution,
- have a collaborative attitude and commitment to open knowledge sharing,
- have an entrepreneurial mindset and the drive to build a business, and
- be available to commit to developing the MVP of your proposed solution.

#### **Your proposed solution should:**

- be presented as a (medium, or high fidelity) prototype
- reflect a creative approach and clear potential for long-term impact,
- be feasible, sustainable, and scalable,
- directly or indirectly meet the programme's focus challenges, and
- demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to addressing the challenges facing the tourism sector in Egypt.

All team members must be legal residents in Egypt and are entitled to gainful employment in the country.

**Team leaders are encouraged to fill in the application form.**

## 4. Evaluation Matrix

- The solution has an innovative approach or disruptive characteristics that do not exist in the market: (20%)
- The solution has the potential to generate social and economic impact, such as improving persons with disabilities' lives and/or enhancing their engagement: (20%)
- The solution has high potential to be scaled up and/or marketed commercially: (20%)
- The participants appear motivated to participate in the programme actively and possess the right skills and knowledge to take the idea further: (15%)
- The participant would benefit from the project's components: (15%)
- The application is well-crafted, answers are elaborated and convey an attitude of commitment, and all the required documents are submitted: (10%)
- Bonus: Additional consideration will be given to teams led by women or include persons with disabilities or people in underserved communities.
  - This criterion is optional. By fulfilling this criterion, the applying team receives bonus consideration to facilitate marginalised groups' representation: (+10%)

If you have questions regarding your applications, please reach out to us at [shc@enpact.org](mailto:shc@enpact.org) Please note that this is the only official channel of communication to receive timely application support.

**Apply here**

After submitting your application, please keep an eye on your email. **If your application is shortlisted, we will be reaching out to schedule an interview.** The email will notify you if your application is accepted or if we are unable to accommodate you in the programme. Please make sure to also regularly check your spam.

The ETENA programme was developed and is being implemented by enpact Stiftung. It is powered and supported by TUI Care Foundation, within the framework of TUI Care Foundation's Empowering Communities Initiative.

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