



{rokbox title=|Unique, Environmentally-Friendly Experiences Will Set the Pace in the Tourism Industry}images/stories/experiencias-unicas-con-responsabilidad-ambientalbiga.jpg{/rokbox}

This was pointed out by the President of PROCOLOMBIA before more than 200 entrepreneurs including tour operators, travel agents and hoteliers who met with the government entity to establish an action plan to promote Colombia's tourism abroad in 2014, thus contributing to the National Government's goal of attracting four million international travelers.

“The World Tourism Organization estimates that by the year 2020 the under-35-years-of-age segment will make around 300 million trips per year, thus making this a very important target-audience which can only be reached with a tourist product that meets their interests ”, explained Lacouture. According to the WTO, the members of this group opt for non-traditional destinations and resort to new technologies for everything related to their trip, from buying tickets to booking accommodation and planning their itinerary, and even sharing their experiences through social media, which is another method for promoting destinations and products.

In consequence, Lacouture highlighted the importance for tourism agencies to have a greater Internet presence to make an impact on "highly connected" target audiences anywhere in the world.

Closer to Nature

International travelers traffic is on the rise –528 million in 1995 to 1,035 million in 2012, according to the WTO. This figure is expected to reach 1.8 billion tourists within three decades.

“This positive behavior in the industry, which represents many growth opportunities for entrepreneurs and countries, is also a challenge as tourists demand greater commitment to the environment on the part of all those involved in the distribution chain ”, stated Lacouture.

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The President of PROCOLOMBIA pointed out that in certain markets like Europe, travelers make decisions regarding accommodation, etc. based on programs for saving water, electricity and even on initiatives related to social responsibility developed by hotels.

With regard to visitors' preferences, market research shows that, on account of increasing expertise, their expectations will increase: they will demand wider variety, more innovation and more authenticity in the tourist packages available.

“We have aligned our promotion strategy in the country according to this trend. The “ [Colombia is Magical Realism](#) ” campaign informs world tourists regarding unique experiences which can only be found in Colombian destinations, inviting them to experience these adventures on their next trip,” said the government official.

The international campaign of "Colombia is Magical Realism", which promotes the country as a tourist destination, was launched in April of 2013. It includes a series of videos and testimonials in five languages on the national tourism products and services available for international travelers. These videos have been posted on the Colombia.travel YouTube channel and have more than 4.2 million views. ([Click here to view the campaign videos](#))

Attendants to the event held this week in Bogota pointed out the format of the Opportunities Forum, which allowed them to establish a comprehensive working plan with PROCOLOMBIA to expand the sale of their products abroad during 2014; including the possibility to learn about the trends that will mark the business pattern in the future.

“Listening to the lectures and realizing that there are a lot of opportunities is very valuable for us, and even becomes a challenge for improving [our services],” said Josefina Klinger, Director of the Mano Cambiada Corporation, with headquarters in the town of Nuqui, which offers travelers accommodation and local gastronomy, as well as adventure and nature-related activities.

In turn, Maria Cecilia Botero, General Manager of Bosques del Saman Hotels, said that "many things happening are sometimes ignored [in the global tourism sector]; having access to all this knowledge is spectacular because it helps us to keep growing." The company is located in the

Coffee Cultural Landscape, and provides cultural and nature-related tourist attractions.

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