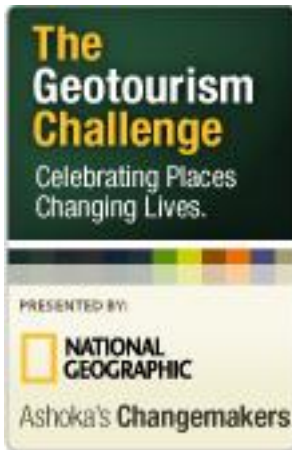


## National Geographic Competition Surfacing Innovations in Tourism

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Press release from: [Ashoka's Changemakers](#)



The National Geographic Society and Ashoka's Changemakers are inviting geotourism innovators to enter a global online collaborative competition. The Geotourism Challenge: Celebrating Places, Changing Lives recognizes entrepreneurs that aim to sustain or enhance the geographical character of a place — its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.

The challenge is accepting entries until April 16, 2008. Everyone is invited to review and discuss applications and help innovators refine their ideas. The finalists of the competition will have the opportunity to present their innovations at a Geotourism Challenge Summit and three winners will receive \$5,000 each.

The competition includes a unique nomination process where travelers worldwide are invited to submit their favorite example of geotourism at [www.changemakers.net/competition/geotourism](http://www.changemakers.net/competition/geotourism)

More than 95 innovations from 46 countries have already been submitted. For example, 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking employs Nepalese women to become adventure professionals. Blue Ventures brings groups of paying volunteers to supply the man power needed to protect threatened marine resources in Madagascar. In the U.S., The Rolling Rains Report increases access to tourism for people with disabilities.

"Tourism can be a positive force to help alleviate poverty, educate the public, and motivate preservation and conservation of cultural, natural and historic resources. When done poorly, tourism fails to provide local benefits and may destroy the distinctive assets of a destination. This Geotourism Challenge invites transparent discussion about ways to manage tourism better," said Jonathan B. Tourtellot, director of National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations (CSD). "The Challenge will recognize effective innovations that can be replicated elsewhere. It's a catalyst to seek ways to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy and experience great destinations."

The Geotourism Challenge is the first of three annual collaborative competitions in partnership with Ashoka's Changemakers. "Ashoka's vision is to build an 'Everyone a Changemaker' world," said Bill Drayton, Ashoka's founder and CEO. "National Geographic's commitment will ensure geotourism innovators, decision-makers and enthusiasts can gather together to inspire a global community to care and to act."

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Ashoka's Changemakers is building an "open source" online community that competes to surface the best social solutions to the world's most pressing issues. To date, Changemakers has attracted more than 2,000 solutions from more than 125 countries. [www.changemakers.net](http://www.changemakers.net).

[You can find this press release here](#)