



Press Release

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The University of South Florida's Patel College of Global Sustainability – the newest member of the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO)

The Blue Community Observatory hosted by the USF Patel College of Global Sustainability (PCGs) of the University of South Florida, USA, has become the latest member of the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories. This Observatory monitors the impact of tourism in parts of the Pinella and Manatee Counties, two popular tourist destinations in Florida.

The observatory is the first sustainable tourism observatory in the United States and will be working with a total of 16 communities within the two counties, aiming at providing policy makers and tourism managers with the regular gathering, analysis and communication of information related to tourism's impacts on environmental, social and economic aspects.

The monitoring area is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Florida due to its *unique coastal environment and marine habitat*. It welcomes over 13 million visitors every year who contribute enormously to the local economy where tourism generates directly 116,300 jobs (Pinellas and Manatee). Continuous monitoring of the tourism impact and performance, across the three dimensions of sustainable development, is therefore a crucial element for sustainable tourism development and evidence-based decisions.

The work of the Blue Community Observatory is focused on areas such as local satisfaction with tourism in the destination; seasonality patterns; energy, waste and water control; food production, clean marinas, education, and policies related to the science of planetary boundaries, among others.

"We highly welcome the Blue Community Observatory at the University of South Florida as a new member of the Network as it will help us to achieve the mission of this initiative in a unique momentum in which we prepare for the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017" said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

"During 2017, the work of the Observatories will be prominently featured globally as crucial elements to monitor tourism development and ensure the sustainability of our sector", he added.

Additional information:

- About the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO)
(<http://sdt.unwto.org/insto-about>)

- About USF Patel College of Global Sustainability Blue Community (<http://www.usf.edu/pcgs/>) and <http://bluecommunity.info>)

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The World Tourism Organization ([UNWTO](#)), a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 156 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Flickr](#).