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# ANTRIM INCOMING & DOMESTIC TRAVEL FORUM. 4th Edition.

4-6 August, 2020

The fourth edition of the ANTRIM Incoming & Domestic Travel Forum serves as a platform for discussions and collaboration amongst tourism industry stakeholders and an opportunity for professional development aimed at amplifying the tourism industry development. The fourth edition of the forum will focus on reacting, adapting and adjusting to the outbreak context, guiding the tourism industry towards new realities of the tourism business. Approximately 150 tourism industry professionals are expected to follow the Forum discussion panels in the online broadcasts.

The Forum will be nationally visible due to online streaming on a local TV platform and will be promoted via a PR & social media campaign. All videos will be placed on ANTRIM platforms and disseminated among tourism industry and public.

COVID-19 outbreak impact on Moldovan tourism industry is devastating. Moldovan tourism showed promising signs of steady growth over the last 4 years, due to continued efforts in destination marketing, product development and upgraded policies supporting incoming and domestic tourism industry. Due to COVID-19 crisis, the entire value chain of the Moldovan tourism industry was affected. At the same time, the micro-businesses, as well as the small and medium enterprises from incoming and domestic tourism segment is a vulnerable group, constrained by regulatory, financial difficulties affecting their competitiveness well before the COVID-19 outbreak. The Moldovan tourism industry is looking for options to re-launch

and gain more economic resilience and in the light of tourism digitization, on-line transactions, new skills and the emergence of additional safety and security needs, deriving from the epidemiologic context, the adaptation to new expectations on behalf of tourism operators and travelers is critical in the post-pandemic period. Business Associations, such as ANTRIM, have a greater role in guiding the tourism companies towards the new realities, offering advisory services, representing the industry voice in the public-private dialogue and advocate for additional regulatory ease of business environment, more technical assistance and support on behalf of the Government and the strategic partners of the industry.

ANTRIM is the leading professional inbound & domestic tourism business association in Moldova, working as a specialized think-tank to support the industry's lobbying and advocacy initiatives and providing valuable support to public authorities in the management of destination marketing activities on international and domestic markets. With a portfolio of 50 members (representing over 80% of the incoming tourism industry), ANTRIM has gained recognition for its dynamic activities related to marketing, promotion, workforce development, training, product development, legal changes and public-private dialogue. ANTRIM efficiently manages the National Tourism Information Center in Chisinau since its launch in fall 2017.



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# AGENDA

## DAY 1 AUGUST, 4th DIGITIZATION AS THE DRIVER OF GROWTH FOR TOURISM BUSINESSES

10:00-10:25



Welcome and Introduction to the forum by ANTRIM's President, **Cristina Frolov**. Presentation of special invitees;

Welcoming remarks by the Minister of Economy and Infrastructure of Moldova, **Sergiu Railean**;  
Welcoming remarks by the USAID Mission Director for Moldova, **Scott Hocklander**;  
Welcoming remarks by the Head of Programmes, British Embassy, **Chris Perkins**;

Presentation of speakers and Panel 1.

10:25-12:10



Discussion Panel 1  
DIGITIZATION AS THE DRIVER OF GROWTH FOR TOURISM BUSINESSES

Panel Facilitator: **Diana Isac**

The role of online platforms in the travel customer journey map;  
Owner and CEO at Winerist.Com (UK).

Keynote speaker: **Alessandra Priante**

#RestartTourism: Policy values in the pathway to tourism recovery;  
Director for Europe at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Keynote speaker: **Montserrat Peñarroya**

Digital skills required by tourism operators in the actual context;  
Digital Marketing Strategy and Digitization Process Specialist, CEO at Quadrant Alfa and Program Director of the "Degree in Digital Business & Innovation" at La Salle (Universitat Ramon Llull).

12:10-12:25



Q&A Session and closing remarks.

\*The session will be held in English. Translation in Romanian will be provided.

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**Diana Isac** is the founder of [winerist.com](http://winerist.com) - the largest marketplace of wine, spirits, and food experiences globally. Winerist is a free online booking service for wine hotels, wine holidays and tours, which offers travel guide compilations to over 135 wine regions worldwide, bringing information from local experts on where to stay, where to go, where to eat and many insider tips. Winerist is also the publisher of a world-renowned Wine, Spirits, Food and Lifestyle Magazine: [winerist.com/magazine](http://winerist.com/magazine), which publishes daily content for wine and food lovers worldwide. As part of her work at Winerist, Ms. Isac is committed to establishing a harmonious connection between the wineries, tour operators, and wine hotels. With Wine Travel being the third fastest growing niche when it comes to Tourism, Ms. Isac sees an excellent opportunity to provide the players of this sector with the right technology and access to the right marketing strategies to better the experience of wine consumers and travelers, but also to better the life and work of the local people providing this service.



**Alessandra Priante** is what is defined as a natural leader with a very strong academic background, international experience, visionary motivation, focus on objectives, and excellent managerial skills. Ms. Alessandra Priante has a strong international background, very versatile and knows 6 languages. Incredibly successful negotiation and fund-raising abilities, a very positive attitude, initiative, and creativity towards problem-solving and crisis management, make her the perfect person to drive a project and a company towards success. As a regional director of the Europe Department at UNWTO, she establishes the vision and strategy for the Department for EUROPE, supporting UNWTO's ability to see its mandate to promote a responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. Leads its implementation, coordinating the activities of the team, and introducing innovative practices. Focuses on augmenting and reinforcing satisfactory value propositions to the Member States thus supporting their leadership in achieving a stronger role of tourism for sustainable development. Promotes and forms strong partnerships with relevant parties.



**Montserrat Peñarroya** is a leading specialist in digitizing companies and organizations. Ms. Peñarroya is also the Program Director of the Degree in Digital Business at La Salle - Universitat Ramon Llull in Barcelona. Since 2014 she is being collaborated with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as "course facilitator" helping regions and countries to achieve their digital transformation. On a professional level, Montserrat Peñarroya is the General Manager of Quadrant Alfa (a digital consultancy firm), has been the General Manager of GEA Internet Project Consulting (a digital marketing firm for the tourism industry), founder and Manager of the Consulting Area of Alt64, a business firm consecrated to digital marketing software and hardware (the Toby eye trackers among other tools), and founder of the 3ISIC Research Institute. She has also been General Manager of the electronic publishing house of the Intercom Group Noticias Online, responsible, among others, for the following publications: Noticias.com, LaEmpresa.net and SoloJuegos.com. Within Intercom, she was the creator and foundational shareholder of Comercio Digital S.A., which she also managed for 4 years. This firm specializes in the set-up and exploitation of portals of classified advertisements and online markets (SoloStocks.com). Currently, Solostocks.com is the biggest B2B marketplace in Spain, according to OJD and Alexa. Specialist in international digital marketing, digital marketing in Tourism, eBusiness, strategy, digitalization of entrepreneurial processes, exports through digital markets and the pinpointing of improvement opportunities through digitalization for small and medium-sized businesses, she acts as a consultant of ACCIO and several Chambers of Commerce as well as PIMESTIC, for the Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya and for the Agència Catalana de Turisme.

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## AGENDA

DAY  
**2**

**AUGUST, 5th**

WHAT IS THERE FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA?  
SHARING KNOW-HOW IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

16:00-16:15



Welcome remarks by ANTRIM's President - **Cristina Frolov** and presentation of the speakers;

16:15-17:35



Discussion Panel 2

WHAT IS THERE FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA?  
SHARING KNOW-HOW IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT.

Panel Facilitator: **Ibrahim Osta**

Rebuilding tourism economies: setting the scene for Moldova's planning for the future;  
Director (Middle East & North Africa) at Chemonics International and Former Chief of Party,  
Building Economic Sustainability Through Tourism Project in Jordan.

Keynote speaker: **Adam Sacks**

How COVID-19 impacted tourism economies and prospects for growth: Inform Moldova's  
strategic priorities;

President of Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics company member. Member of the U.S.  
Department of Commerce, Travel & Tourism Advisory Board.

Keynote speaker: **Justin Reid**

Emerging visitor behavior insights to inform Moldova's future marketing and planning;  
Director of Destination Marketing, Europe, Middle East & Africa at TripAdvisor.

Keynote speaker: **Al Merschen**

How destinations can position themselves to capture international visitors in a more competitive  
environment due to the COVID pandemic: **Lessons for Moldova;**

Founder of Myriad marketing, representing more tourist offices than any company in North  
America. In 2016, Myriad became part of MMGY Global portfolio of companies with presence in  
various countries and continents. As a partner at MMGY, his focus is on the development of  
international insights.

17:35-17:50



Q&A Session and closing remarks.

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**Ibrahim Osta** is an international tourism development expert based in Washington, D.C. He served as Chief of party of the \$100 million USAID tourism development portfolio in Jordan which helped grow the tourism sector several billion dollars. He has led, advised and continues to support tourism development activities in various countries such as Nepal, Ukraine, Georgia, Timor Lest, Egypt, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Lebanon. Currently, he is member of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Panel of Experts and served earlier on the Governing Body of United Nations Foundation World Heritage Alliance, where he co-designed the People Protecting Places campaign adopted by UNESCO to conserve World Heritage sites. With a background in finance and economics, Mr. Osta is a regular speaker in international tourism forums and co-led the UN International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development Global Forum with the World Bank and UN World Tourism Organization. He advises on tourism development and economic impact strategies, destination resilience and experience design.



**Adam Sacks** has worked with destinations, industry associations, and companies around the world in the areas of opportunity and risk assessments, policy analysis, and economic impact for more than two decades. Adam's work has provided the foundation for billions of dollars in capital investment decisions by hotel companies, developers, and investors. Destination marketing organizations around the world rely on Tourism Economics data and scenario models to inform global marketing investment allocations. Adam also supports trade associations in the aviation, hotel, and broader travel arena with forecasts widely considered to be an industry standard. And by examining the economic merits of travel facilitation, taxation, and tourism promotion initiatives, Adam's work has influenced critical government policies. He is an authority on measuring the economic impact of visitor activity and has analyzed the impacts of cruising, gaming, timeshare, hotels, new attractions, and destination marketing. Adam regularly presents to corporate strategic planning teams on the threats and opportunities facing their businesses and is a member of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Travel & Tourism Advisory Board.



**Justin Reid** is the Director of Destination Marketing, Europe, Middle East & Africa at TripAdvisor where he works with Destination Marketing Organizations to increase awareness, interest, and ultimately travel to the destinations in the EMEA region. Previously, for 13 years, he was the Head of Digital and Social Media for VisitBritain, responsible for all aspects of digital and online marketing from the core websites, social media, search engine marketing, web content, campaigns, analytics through to usability, and the overall customer experience and eCRM.



**Al Merschen** is the founder of Myriad and a partner with MMGY Global, Al's efforts are hands-on and wide-ranging. More often than not, you can find him developing strategic solutions to client challenges, creating industry partnerships, and supporting Myriad and MMGY Global's growth. Al's also an accomplished speaker, having presented on five continents and in countless countries on topics including research, marketing, changing trends, and the creative process. In more than 30 years with Myriad, Al's worked with more than international and U.S.-based destinations. His experience touches most categories in the travel and tourism industry, including cruise lines, airlines, tour companies, and consortia. While covering millions of miles across dozens of countries, Al's done it all. He's been lucky enough to jump out of an airplane over the Great Barrier Reef, samba in full costume for Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, and summit Mount Kilimanjaro. He's even bungee jumped off Macao's tallest tower, trekked the villages of Papua New Guinea, hang glided in Cape Town and square danced in the Ozarks.

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## AGENDA

# DAY 3 AUGUST, 6th

## NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF MOLDOVA: HOW TO ADAPT AND ADJUST TO THE NEW CONTEXT

10:00-10:15

Welcome remarks by ANTRIM's Director - **Victoria Bucătaru** and presentation of the speakers;

10:15-12:10

Discussion Panel 3  
**ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF MOLDOVA: HOW TO ADAPT AND ADJUST. PROGRAM SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY IN MOLDOVA**

Panel Facilitator: **Diana Lazăr**

Deputy Chief of Party (Chemonics International), Moldova Competitiveness Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Sweden, and UK Aid.

**Doina Nistor**

Chief of Party (Chemonics International), Moldova Competitiveness Project, funded by USAID, Sweden and UK Aid.

**Lilia Palii**

General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure of Moldova,.

**Veronica Arpintin**

Principal Manager, Advice for Small Business, SME F&D, EBRD Moldova.

**Rodica Verbeniuc**

General Director of Moldovan Investment Agency.

**Iulia Costin**

General Director of Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development (ODIMM) from Moldova.

**Vadim Curmei**

General Director of Agency for Agriculture and Regional Development Subsidy and Payments (AIPA).

12:10-12:25

Q&A Session and closing remarks.

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**Diana Lazar** is the Deputy Chief of Party of the Moldova Competitiveness Project, funded by USAID, Sweden and UK Aid. Ms. Lazar is also the team leader for the project's assistance in the Wine and Tourism industries of the Republic of Moldova. In over ten years of development work experience, she has defined and implemented significant reforms and activities that improved the value chain competitiveness, including the tourism country brand marketing programs, tourism product development for local SMEs and tourism industry business enabling initiatives. Tourism specialist certified in Sustainable tourism, Tourism Destination Marketing and Management by George Washington University.



**Doina Nistor** is the Chief of Party of Moldova Competitiveness Project, a 6-year program worth US\$28.5 million, funded by USAID, Sweden and UK aid, leading competitiveness in Moldova's heritage and emerging industries – winemaking, tourism, fashion design and manufacturing, IT clustered with creative services. Ms. Nistor also served as the Chief of Party of the USAID Moldova Competitiveness Enhancement and Enterprise Development II Project. Under her leadership, the Moldovan tourism industry witnessed a steady progress and adopted sustainable practices that led to economic prosperity. The assistance provided via the Moldova Competitiveness Project helped Moldova market itself as an emerging sustainable travel destination, earning impressive ratings from CNN Travel, The Times, The Independent, Lonely Planet, Vogue, National Geographic and other influential international media.



**Lilia Palii** is the General State Secretary at the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure. With 25 years of experience in public administration, and in international development projects related to tourism development, Ms. Palii is leading the policy and regulation development related to the tourism industry.



**Veronica Arpintin** manages the Advice for Small Businesses Program of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in Moldova, that supported hundreds of businesses by facilitating access to local consultancy, international expertise and know-how over the past 15 years. In her work, Mrs. Arpintin is actively involved in promoting business access to innovation, energy efficiency, digital technologies, and economic inclusion. Also, she takes particular interest and passion in promoting women empowerment in business and is one of the founders as well as a honorary member of the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Moldova.

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**Rodica Verbeniuc** is the general director at the Moldovan Investment Agency. The agency aims at contributing to the economic progress of the Republic of Moldova by investing in the country brand promotion, increasing the flow of foreign funding, seeking new export markets, developing economic diplomacy, and advancing the tourism sector. Ms. Verbeniuc has experience as the Corporate Communications Director and is highly proficient in effective management in Strategic & Operational Integrated Communications, possessing a unique blend of European business practices and theories with the empiric expertise of their utilization in the emerging markets of East Europe, Eurasia, Central Asia.



**Iulia Costin** is the General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development from Republic of Moldova, having as top priority the private sector competitiveness and economic smart transformation initiatives. With more than 20 years of experience in macroeconomic and regional development assistance she has a valuable background in designing and implementing instruments supporting innovative SME performance. As well, being the founder and President of the National Women Platform from Moldova, she is heavily involved in striving for economic empowerment by advocating a full and effective participation of women in leadership in all spheres of life. economic smart transformation initiatives. With more than 20 years of experience in macroeconomic and regional development assistance she has a valuable background in designing and implementing instruments supporting innovative SME performance. As well, being the founder and President of the National Women Platform from Moldova, she is heavily involved in striving for economic empowerment by advocating a full and effective participation of women in leadership in all spheres of life.



**Vadim Curmei** holds the position of Director of the Agency for Intervention and Payments for Agriculture since 2019. The mission of the Agency is to manage the resources of the National Fund for Agriculture and Rural Development and the resources of the development partners, thus, implementing state policies in the development of agriculture and rural areas through subsidies and other forms of financial support. The achievements of the Agency over a decade, as an impact on the national economy, is quantified by financing over 40 000 investment objects in agriculture and related industries, providing 6 billion lei as subsidies to agricultural producers, moreover, it was possible to attract investments in agriculture and rural areas over 35 billion lei thus generating the creation of over 10 thousand new jobs. He has a degree in civil law, owns extensive experience in the juridical field, simultaneously acquiring extensive professional knowledge in the field of subsidising.