

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Equality in Tourism Announces Winners of the Gender Equality Champion of the Year Award at ITB Berlin 2025

Berlin, Germany – 6th March 2025 - [Equality in Tourism](#), an international organisation committed to advancing gender equality within the tourism industry, is thrilled to announce the winners of the prestigious Gender Equality Champion of the Year Award 2025.

Returning for its third year, the award is bestowed upon remarkable organisations committed to promoting gender equality within tourism and hospitality across the globe. With diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives increasingly under threat, its aims to celebrate equitable practices and encourage their adoption are more significant than ever.

This year's shortlist featured nine outstanding candidates who had demonstrated exceptional dedication to policies, practices and initiatives that empower women and create more equitable workplaces.

Winners from the two categories – Accommodation and Travel & Destinations – were unveiled during a special ceremony held on 6th March at [ITB Berlin](#)'s LGBTQ+ Tourism Pavilion Stage:

Travel & Destinations category:

- [Responsible Travel, Ecuador](#) - Judges felt the South American travel operator “lives and breathes gender equality”, as evidenced in an outstanding application and a public declaration of their values on their website. Since making the 2024 shortlist, they've continued to strengthen their commitment to gender equality, including within their environmental recovery projects.

Accommodation category:

- [Community Homestay Network, Nepal](#) - The judges praised this social enterprise homestay network on the thorough and transparent gender equality efforts that run throughout their business, including areas such as disaster risk reduction, climate risk and gender awareness training.

The panel also highly commended the new women-led [Amba Yaalu \(Mango Friends\) Kandalama hotel in Sri Lanka](#), spotlighting them as a promising tourism actor with huge potential.

These organisations follow in the footsteps of Eternal Landscapes Mongolia, Accor Brazil Embrace Program and Travel Excellence – the former Gender Equality Champion of the Year

Award winners who have all pushed boundaries and made impactful strides towards a more balanced workplace.

This year's winners were selected from the shortlist by a distinguished panel of global gender and tourism experts, including representatives from the two award sponsors – Michelle Mason from the [World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance](#) and Dawn Briggs from [Sojern](#). They were joined by Hector De Castro of Regenera Luxury, Rika Jean-François of MissionRespo, and UNWTO consultant Lucy Ferguson.

Michelle Mason, Social Responsibility and Recognition Programme Manager at the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, comments: "At the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, our mission is to create a fairer and more inclusive hospitality industry. As a sponsor of the Gender Equality Champion of the Year Award, we proudly support Equality in Tourism in recognising inspiring organisations that go beyond words to create real impact.

"All of the shortlisted nominees exemplify extraordinary dedication to advancing gender equality. Their work doesn't just inspire. It ignites meaningful change that extends far beyond their immediate reach. We celebrate and recognise their commitment to the cause, as true changemakers in our industry."

[Dr. Stroma Cole](#), Reader in tourism at the University of Westminster and Co-Director of Equality in Tourism, chaired the judging panel and echoes this sentiment: "Our 2025 Gender Equality Champions each submitted exceptional applications that demonstrated real care and commitment to creating change for women. We're delighted to spotlight the impactful and transformative work they're doing to pioneer a more equitable industry.

"There can be no true sustainability in tourism without gender equality. We urge fellow organisations to look to our winners for inspiration – they set a shining example for peers to learn from."

The award aligns with the [UNWTO's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), aiming to enhance tourism's positive impact on women's lives.

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information and interviews, contact kavita@equalityintourism.org.

About Equality in Tourism: [Equality in Tourism](#) is an international non-profit organisation helping transform the lives of women in tourism, by advocating for gender equality across the industry. They envision a just tourism industry that empowers women and girls, promotes diversity and inclusion, and contributes to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of local communities. Their work spans four pillars: impact projects, training and consultation, research, and the pioneering Gender Equality Champion of the Year Award.