

GLOBAL TRAVEL FUTURES FORUM 2026

PARIS | 28-30 OCTOBER 2026



AGENDA

**Can travel become the bridge
between competing AI futures?**

Central Question

Can travel become the bridge between competing AI futures?

Three days. Three distinct purposes. One strategic arc: evidence and the next generation; the main international Forum; and a separate ETC strategy-development process informed by the Forum.

The future is already happening. Just not everywhere in the same way. The Forum begins with five different AI pathways, but it does not stop comparing them. Travel is where intelligence, identity, payments, mobility, data, infrastructure, sustainability and human judgement must work together in the real world. The central challenge is orchestration: what can interoperate, what must remain sovereign, who controls the traveller relationship, and where must humans remain in charge?

Two-Day Overview

Date	Format / Venue	Purpose	Primary Output
Wed 28 Oct	Academic Afternoon & survey results announced at La Sorbonne	Evidence, Gen Z, trust, the future traveller and the future workforce	GenZ position report with survey findings
Thu 29 Oct	Global Travel Futures Forum — Main Event Hôtel de l'Industrie	Five AI Pathways; orchestration; sovereignty; alignment; interoperability; human agency; high-end travel;	Strategic synthesis, relationships and partner engagement

Wednesday 28 October

Academic Afternoon & Observatory Launch — La Sorbonne

Audience: academic researchers, students, faculty, selected media and institutional guests.

Strategic purpose: establish the evidence base for the Forum through research, emerging behaviour and the perspective of the next generation. The afternoon asks not only how AI will change the traveller, but whether it can help solve, or deepen travel and tourism's workforce challenge.

13:30-14:30 | Arrival & Registration

14:30-14:45 | Welcome — Knowledge as the Foundation for Action

Dr. Jean-Michel Chapuis, Associate Professor, Sorbonne University

14:45-15:35 | Academic Session 1 — AI, Human Behavior and the Future Traveller

Presentation of Sorbonne GEN Z Survey findings - Sebastien Lion, Professor of Tourism and AI, Sorbonne University

A discussion based on the findings of what AI is changing in decision-making, trust, discovery, agency, consumption and the traveller experience. What do we know? What remains uncertain? Where is the evidence still weak? This is a broad academic and human-behavior session;

SPEAKERS

Dr. Jean-Michel Chapuis, Associate Professor, Sorbonne University
 Prof. Lee Miles, Associate Dean, Bournemouth University
 Manuel Heurteux, Executive Director, IMHI program, ESSEC Business School
 Sebastien Lion, Professor of Tourism and AI, Sorbonne University
 Moderator: Rajan Datar, Journalist and host, BBC

15:35-16:00 | Short Break

16:00-16:40 | Academic Session 2 —Student Debate “What is Real in the Age of AI?”

The Debate

When a photograph can be generated, a voice imitated and a convincing news story invented, how do we decide what to believe? Students debate how AI is changing trust in news, advertising and social media—and whether it can also help us check facts and challenge misleading claims. The debate centres on one proposition: “In the age of AI, responsibility for verifying information should lie primarily with the platforms and publishers distributing it.”

One team argues that individuals cannot reasonably investigate everything they encounter, and that those distributing information must provide evidence, transparency and accountability. The opposing team argues that personal judgement, media literacy and the freedom to question competing accounts remain essential—and that giving platforms authority to determine what is true creates risks of its own.

Using examples relevant to young people and travellers—from influencer recommendations and destination advertising to breaking news and online reviews—the students explore what deserves their trust, what requires verification and when they should withhold judgement. The session closes with practical principles for deciding what to believe, use and share.

Format: Two student teams, moderated debate, audience participation and closing recommendations.

SPEAKERS

Gabriel Chambet, Masters’ Program 2nd year, Hospitality Real Estate IMHI – Essec Business School; Major, Institut Paul Bocuse, International Hospitality Management
 Alice Bonamy, IMHI Master 2nd year, Digital Leadership and Food & Beverage majors, ESSEC Business School
 Carl Hayek, Master Program 2nd year, MSc Hospitality Management, ESSEC Business School
 TBA, Sorbonne
 TBA, Sorbonne
 TBA, Sorbonne Moderator: Jill Sinclair, Chief Engagement Officer, GRN

16:40-17:15 | Academic Session 3 — Will AI Save or Destroy Travel’s Future Workforce?

A youth and workforce-focused examination of the work underway through GTTP and its network. Travel and tourism faces a long-term challenge in attracting, preparing and retaining the next generation. Can AI make the sector more accessible, productive and attractive — opening new routes into careers, skills and entrepreneurship? Or will automation remove entry-level opportunities, weaken human development and deepen the disconnect between young people and industry? Students, educators and industry voices confront the question together.

SPEAKERS

Anne Lotter, Executive Director, GTTP

Lionel Joubert-Gaillard, Head of International Development & Partnerships, G2A

Moderator: Omar Hasineh, Travel and Tourism Advisor, GRN

17:15-18:00 | Academic Networking Reception & Cocktail**MAIN EVENT — Thursday 29 October 2026****Venue: Hôtel de l'Industrie, Paris**

FORUM'S Strategic purpose: position travel as the world's proving ground for competing AI futures. The day moves from understanding five different pathways, to testing them against the real traveller journey, to confronting the systems and tensions that no organization or country can solve alone: orchestration, interoperability, sovereignty, human agency and sustainability.

AGENDA**08:00-09:00 | Arrival Coffee & Networking****08:45 | Opening — The Future Is Already Happening. Just Not Everywhere in the Same Way.**

Rajan Datar, Presenter and Host, BBC gives the background and introduces the co-organisers: GRN / Atout France / ETC/Sorbonne. This is a working international dialogue, not a conventional conference. What we learned in China. Why it was a wake-up call. Why travel leaders may be looking at one future while several others are already being built.

09:00-09:10 | Official Address**SPEAKERS**

Adam Oubuih, CEO Atout France

Eduardo Santander, CEO, ETC

Tom Jenkins, CEO, ETOA

Christian Delom, President, GRN

TBA, University of Sorbonne

09:10-09:50 | Opening Keynote — AI Without the Hype: What Artificial Intelligence Can and Cannot Do Dr. Luc Julia, former Chief Scientific Officer, Renault Group; AI pioneer, co-creator of Siri and author of There Is No Such Thing as Artificial Intelligence

As AI becomes embedded across business, society and the traveller journey, are we confusing technological capability with intelligence? A provocative examination of what AI actually is, what it can realistically achieve, and where human judgment and agency must remain central. Luc will have a discussion with Rajan Datar about his life, experience and AI.

9:50 - 10:30 SESSION 1 — The High-End Traveller: Can AI Deliver What Money Cannot Buy?

AI can know preferences, anticipate needs, remove friction and personalize at extraordinary scale. But high-end travel is built on discretion, trust, taste, access, judgement and human relationships. Does AI make premium travel more personal — or merely more predictive? Who owns the data behind intimacy? What should never be automated? Can exclusivity survive when every traveller has an intelligent concierge?

SPEAKERS

David Kenworthy, VP Product & Innovation, MMGY

Crystal Pang, General Manager, Global Business Solution (Europe & North America), Rednote

Nacho Sanabria, COO and Partner, Delaight

Elizabeth Persons, Director of Development, Destinations, Travelzoo

Moderator: Rachel Read, Director of Insight and Business Improvement, ETOA

10:30 - 10:45 BREAK**10:45-12:00 | SESSION 2 — You've Only Seen One Future: Five AI Pathways Meet in Paris**

The session will open with a brief conversation with BCG's Managing Director and Partner, Rylan Henriques to set the geopolitical scene that has given rise to the pathways.

The Forum's signature framework. Five different pathways are shaping AI and its application to travel. This is not a parade of regional presentations. The session compares what each pathway is optimizing for, what each sees differently, and where the fault lines lie. What happens when a traveller, a company or a destination must operate across all five? Where can systems interoperate? Where does sovereignty create necessary boundaries? What can the pathways learn from one another?

SPEAKERS

United States — innovation, capital and hyperscalers;

Chinmai Sharma, Industry Advisor - Travel Technology; former SVP/Global Head, Lodging, Ground and Media, Sabre; former President, RateGain; EVP and CRO, IHCL; VP, Starwood Group; VP, Wyndham

China — ecosystem integration, orchestration and agentic commerce;

Dr. Pei Shen, former VP Strategy, Alibaba Cloud International and Tencent Intelligent Mobility, former McKinsey Associate Partner

India — population-scale AI, digital public infrastructure and talent;

Jayanth N. Kolla, Founder and Partner, Convergence Catalyst

Middle East — national transformation, sovereign investment and leapfrogging

Rylan Henriques, Managing Director and Partner, BCG

Ali Hajjaj, Founder and CEO, Labiba.ai

Europe/UK — trust, sovereignty, regulation and human-centered deployment;

Adam Oubieh, CEO, ATOUT France

Shaon Talkuder, CEO and Founder, GEO Tourist

Orchestration: Rajan Datar, Journalist and Host, BBC

12:00 - 12:45 SESSION 3 From Five AI Pathways to Real-World Solutions

In a fireside conversation, Chinmai Sharma and Greg Land of AWS examine how AI is being put to work across markets, drawing on projects in travel and hospitality. Through practical examples, they explore what interoperability, orchestration, sovereignty and alignment mean for travel leaders—and how safety, privacy and human control are addressed in deployment. What is working today, whose interests do AI agents serve, and what remains unresolved as different AI ecosystems increasingly interact?

In Conversation

Greg Land, Global Segment Leader, Travel and Hospitality, AWS

Chinmai Sharma, Industry Advisor; former SVP and Global Head, Lodging, Ground and Media, Sabre; former President, RateGain; EVP and CRO, IHCL; VP, Starwood Group; VP, Wyndham

12:45-14:15 | NETWORKING LUNCH — with Optional Working Conversations

Lunch remains primarily a networking period. Guests may optionally join focused facilitated conversations on:

- 1) Trust, Identity & Human Agency; facilitated by Shaon Talkuder, CEO and Founder, GEO Tourist
- 2) Interoperability, Payments & the Agentic Traveller; facilitated by Jonathan Huffstutler, CMO, EONA-X
- 3) Destination Intelligence, Competitiveness & Resilience; facilitated by Patrick Torrent, CEO Catalonia Board of Tourism and Mary Harris, Director, Bird Global Advisory
- 4) AI in Resilience and Crisis Management- Prof. Lee Miles, Associate Dean for Research, Innovation and Enterprise, Bournemouth University

14:15 - 15:00 SESSION 4 Who Orchestrates the Journey When No One Controls the Whole Journey?

The traveller may be inspired on one platform, advised by an AI agent, authenticated through a digital identity, pay through a new payment rail, cross a sovereign border, move through multiple transport systems and experience services delivered by dozens of companies. No single organization controls the whole journey. So who — or what — orchestrates it? What must be interoperable? Where are the commercial and sovereign boundaries? Who is accountable when autonomous systems act across them? Can travel become the real-world proving ground for systems built separately to work together?

SPEAKERS

Natasha ten Cate, CEO AI and Product leader; Board Member tech industry, Booking.com

Javier Cabrerizo, Chief Strategy, Transformation & AI Officer, HBX Group

Ada XU, Director International, Fliggy

Jonathan Huffstutler, CMO, EONA-X

Gregoire Pasquet, Co-Founder and CEO, Worldia

Moderator: Rajan Datar, Journalist and Host, BBC

15:00-16:00 SESSION 5 Sovereignty in the Age of the AI Traveller: Who Owns Identity, Data and Trust?

Sovereignty becomes real when the traveller crosses borders. Who owns the traveller's identity, data, permissions and relationship when American platforms, European rules, Chinese ecosystems, sovereign digital infrastructure and global payment systems meet in a single journey? This session goes beyond regulation. It examines digital identity, authentication, cybersecurity, data control, borders, payment infrastructure and the right of countries, companies and individuals to retain agency. What must be shared for travel to work? What should never be shared? Can interoperability exist without surrendering sovereignty?

SPEAKERS

Philippe Person, Director of Investment, Tourism Sector, Banque Des Territoires, Caisse Desdépôts

Shaon Talkuder, CEO and Founder, Geotourist

Maximilian Strotmann, Director General, Mobility and Transport, European Commission, Tourism Unit

Matthew Peake, Head of Government Affairs, EMEA, Trip.com

TBA, Core Payments Europe, Mastercard

Moderator: Mary Harris, Founder/Director, Bird Global Advisory

16:00-16:40 | SESSION 6 — Where Does AI Hit the Wall? What Limitations Does AI Have?

As AI moves from assisting people to acting autonomously, its limitations become as important as its capabilities. This session examines where AI still fails, where human judgment remains essential, and how organizations decide what should

Core question: As systems become more autonomous, where must the human retain authority — and who decides?

SPEAKERS

Tom Jenkins, CEO, ETOA

Rika Jean-François, Founder, MissionRespo; Director of Sustainability, Queer Destinations

Carlota Galvan, ESG Director, HBX Group

Moderator: Prof. Lee Miles, Associate Dean for Research, Innovation and Enterprise, Bournemouth University

16:40 - 17:15 SESSION 7 | UN TOURISM'S AFFILIATE MEMBER Session - From Ambition to Implementation: AI for Sustainable and Resilient Tourism

Tourism organizations, DMOs, CVBs increasingly recognize the potential of artificial intelligence to support more sustainable development, anticipate disruption and strengthen resilience. Yet many destinations and businesses remain uncertain

about where to begin, which solutions to prioritize and how to access the data required to make them work. Much of today's AI innovation is being developed within closed ecosystems, using proprietary customer and operational data. At the same time, new collaborative models, including shared tourism and mobility data spaces are seeking to enable organizations to combine insights without surrendering control of their data. Drawing on the experience of UN Tourism Affiliate Members, we will examine how destinations, governments and businesses move from isolated pilots to practical implementation. We will consider what data must be shared, what can remain proprietary, how public and private actors can work together, and how smaller organizations can participate. The discussion will identify the governance, capabilities and partnerships needed to use AI to build a tourism economy that is both more sustainable and better prepared for disruption.

SPEAKERS

Patrick Torrent, CEO, Catalonia Tourism/Board Member, UNTourism

Nikolaos Gkolfinopoulos, Head of Tourism, ICF

TBA, Trip Advisor pending

TBA, Mindtrip pending

Moderator: Sinisa Topalovic, PhD., Partner, Horwath HTL, Saudi Arabia; Global Head of Tourism Advisory, Horwath HTL

17:15 - 17:50 SESSION 8 — Can AI Save the Destination — or Accelerate Its Destruction?

The same technologies that can hyper-personalize travel and stimulate demand may also intensify pressure on destinations. Can AI help manage visitor flows, energy, water, transport, carrying capacity and climate disruption — or will it simply make it easier to sell more travel, faster? The session confronts both sides of the equation: predictive intelligence for resilience and destination management; AI's own energy, water and infrastructure demands; the risk of hyper-consumption; and the question of who acts when the data says a destination has reached its limit.

SPEAKERS

Prof. Lee Miles, Associate Dean for Research, Innovation and Enterprise, Bournemouth University

David Kenworthy, VP Product and Innovation, MMGY

Daniel Iglesias, Chief Data Scientist and Director, NECSTouR's Tourism of Tomorrow Lab

Moderator: Rachel Read, Director of Insight and Business Improvement, ETOA

17:50 - 18:30 SESSION 9 — What Travel Leaders Are Underestimating

A fast, forward-looking discussion of developments moving faster than the industry recognizes. Not another trends panel. What are leaders still treating as separate issues that are already converging? Agentic commerce. Robotics and automation. Digital identity. New payment rails. Cybersecurity. Sovereign infrastructure. Energy constraints. Changing human behavior. The transfer of power from interfaces to agents. The real question is not what comes next, but what is already happening that travel has not yet understood.

SPEAKERS

Ali Hajjaj, Founder and CEO, Labiba.ai

Lionel Joubert-Gaillard, Head of International Development & Partnerships, G2A

Dr. Pei Shen, former VP Strategy, Alibaba Cloud International; Tencent Intelligent Mobility; former McKinsey Associate Partner

Gilbert Reveillon, Digital Transformation, AI & Emerging Technology Strategist; Secretary General, ANDESE

Moderator: Rajan Datar, Journalist and Host, BBC

18:30 | Closing Remarks & Transition to Evening

GRN / partners. The value is the quality of the dialogue, the strategic synthesis and the relationships created.