

Awake

Journeys that connect
and transform territories

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*The translation of this document was done with Artificial Intelligence.

Latimpacto



**Year of
foundation**
2013



**Type of
company**
Private



No. of employees
32



Headquarters
Bogotá

Description

Awake is a private Colombian company with over twelve years of experience in biocultural, sustainable, and regenerative tourism. Its purpose is to protect nature and connect travelers with local hosts in Colombia's natural destinations, promoting biodiversity conservation and the creation of sustainable economic opportunities in rural communities.

With an impact-driven approach, Awake focuses on commercialization, capacity building, and actions that drive a sustainable model connecting tourism with biodiversity conservation and regeneration. Much of its effort is dedicated to ensuring that every experience lived by its travelers is transformative, memorable, and inspires more conscious and responsible behavior.

From its Impact department, Awake works on three components: organizational impact management, aligning the company with its purpose, and designing the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system. Additionally, it works to incorporate the positive impact of its hosts and Awake itself into the customer experience and to create new opportunities to generate value from that impact.

Awake is based in Bogotá, where it coordinates operations throughout Colombia. After operating under a fully virtual model during the pandemic, it has gradually returned to a hybrid work model.

The Challenge:

Purpose-Driven, Innovative Tourism



Awake faces the challenge of consolidating its growth as a financially sustainable company while amplifying its transformative purpose. Its value proposition lies at the intersection of nature and cultural tourism, biodiversity conservation, and community development, which involves managing the tension between commercial growth and the generation of positive impact. In this context, the main challenge lies in turning impact into the core engine of its business model, aligning profitability, scalability, and purpose.

As an impact-driven company, Awake must continue to consolidate a profitable business model while fostering partnerships with local communities, promoting conservation efforts, and delivering meaningful experiences to travelers. This requires constant innovation in how it coordinates stakeholders, measures results, designs products, and communicates value to both customers and impact investors.

Awake's market consolidation has been driven not only by effective commercialization through a multichannel platform but also by its ability to demonstrate that tourism can be a legitimate vehicle for environmental regeneration, economic inclusion, and the conservation of cultural heritage.

Innovative Solution Focused on Regenerative Triple-Impact Tourism

Awake has designed and implemented a regenerative tourism model that integrates environmental, social, and economic impact through a connected commercial and territorial platform. Its proposal transforms tourism into a practical tool for biodiversity conservation, capacity building, and the generation of sustainable income in Colombia's rural territories.

Awake's innovation lies in operating as an impact enterprise that goes beyond conventional tourism, integrating science, conservation, regeneration, and markets within a business framework. Through a multichannel commercialization infrastructure, it connects a network of over 150 local tourism hosts, most of whom are also engaged in significant conservation and restoration initiatives in their territories. These organizations coordinate services and provide meaningful experiences for travelers.

Key components of this solution include:



A regenerative model aligned with a theory of change aimed at generating three types of impact:

1

- People connected to the organization experience positive transformation in their well-being—healing and strengthening body, mind, and spirit.
- Ecosystems are conserved and restored, contributing to climate change mitigation and reducing biodiversity loss.
- Their actions inspire others, multiplying the reach of their impact.

2

Awake is especially interested in understanding how tourism can positively contribute to conservation and restoration efforts, with tangible effects on ecosystem health. It implements participatory monitoring systems to evaluate both the actions carried out and the results in terms of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem status.

3

The company is committed to building through collaboration and networked efforts across the organization. One of its current priorities is creating a biodiversity biomonitoring network in partnership with local organizations and strategic actors such as BID Lab, Naturatech, and the Humboldt Institute.

4

Awake aims to generate transformative experiences, understood as personal processes that awaken travelers' connection to themselves, the land, and all human and more-than-human beings inhabiting the territories. "We are nature"—reconnecting with that awareness of belonging is the guiding principle behind each experience it designs.

5

It is developing a regenerative hospitality line in partnership with a hotel chain, embodying sustainability principles in infrastructure, operations, and customer experience.

6

Awake promotes training and business support strategies for local ventures, from early stages to scaling, encouraging viable and sustainable business models in areas with limited tourism services.

Its host network contributes to the conservation of approximately 80,000 hectares of key ecosystems. Awake has long worked to ensure that its business model directly benefits these organizations leading significant conservation and restoration actions. These initiatives also offer high-value experiences to travelers, who feel part of a greater purpose.

The network of local hosts includes operators who integrate lodging, food, transportation, and guiding services into value-added tourism products. These organizations function as local anchors, promoting employment, community leadership, and productive linkages as drivers of social impact.

Local hosts generate around 2,000 rural jobs, supported by Awake's operations. The following results reflect Awake's commitment to social impact:

- Awake has worked with more than 300 local tourism organizations over its 10 years of operation, selling between 100 and 150 local experiences per year on average.
- Between 2018 and 2024, Awake channeled COP 30.674 billion in revenue to local tourism enterprises.
- In 2023 and 2024, more than 60% of Awake's sales were directed to municipalities with multidimensional poverty rates above 40%.

- Most of its hosts are organizations composed of vulnerable or marginalized populations, or led by women.
- 1,146 individuals and 162 businesses have participated in capacity-building processes driven by Awake.
- It offers a virtual training platform for its hosts (AwakeU), which provides access to over 70 courses.

Awake's goal is twofold: to consolidate this network of hosts—who are important conservation leaders through tourism—and to build a collaborative knowledge system that integrates monitoring practices with the conservation and restoration efforts developed by the organizations in its network.

Additionally, under a project implemented with USAID, Awake developed its Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) System, a key internal tool for impact management. In 2025, the organization aims to begin active monitoring and establish a baseline for its impact, in alignment with its theory of change focused on the three previously mentioned impact areas.

Awake itself represents an innovative model—a vehicle to generate, monetize, and create value through impact.

Current Portfolio

Awake's operations are based on the commercialization of nature and cultural tourism experiences—or biocultural tourism—offered as full travel packages of two or more days, including lodging, food, transportation, guiding, and environmental or cultural activities. These experiences are co-developed with local organizations that are part of the Awake Host Network, which includes over 150 community tourism operators, associations, eco-lodges, cooperatives, and local guides functioning as anchor organizations in their territories.

The company has developed a multichannel commercialization infrastructure that includes its digital platform, B2B channels, a call center, and an international strategy, allowing it to reach national, international, and corporate market segments. Additionally, it is developing a regenerative hotel chain in partnership with a Colombian hotel group.



Awake also supports capacity building and the development of local businesses through projects funded by international cooperation, NGOs, and the private sector. This support ranges from improving business models to consolidating tourism products with impact, promoting conservation, restoration, and sustainable biodiversity use.

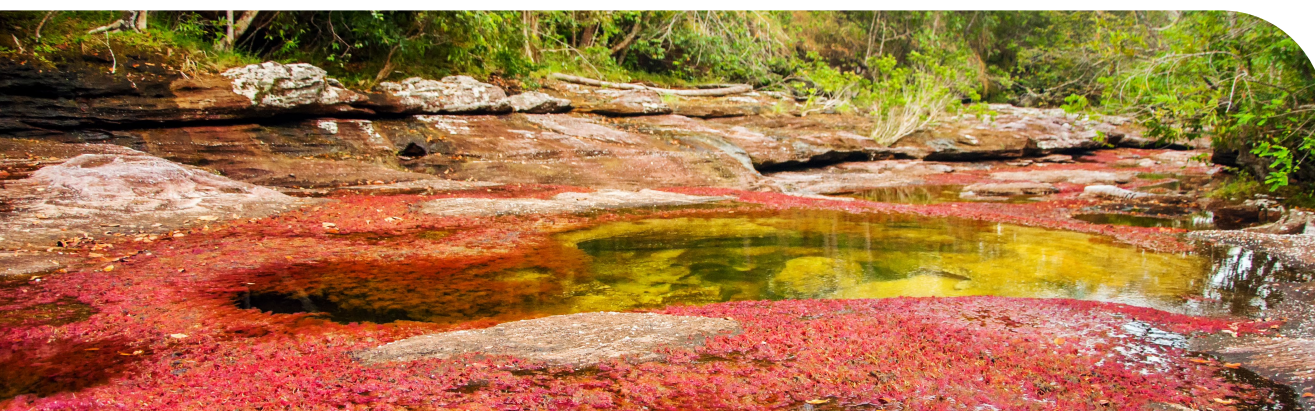
As a complement, Awake has created AwakeU, an online training platform offering content on leadership, sustainable tourism, conservation, and business management for members of its host network.

Additionally, the company leads a development initiative called Awake BIO, which aims to enhance and measure conservation, restoration, and sustainable biodiversity use through nature-based tourism. Through this initiative, Awake has implemented community-based biodiversity monitoring systems (such as camera traps and bioacoustics) and satellite monitoring to verify conservation agreements with its hosts, tracking positive social and environmental outcomes.

As part of this strategy, Awake has collaborated with 44 organizations to implement monitoring systems that identified 242 species through bioacoustics and 57 species through camera traps. Satellite analysis of 39 properties verified non-deforestation agreements, identifying a total of 10,637 hectares of stable forest.

Awake BIO has a dedicated website presenting key results from Phase 1 of the process: <https://awakebio.awake.travel/inicio-2/>, which includes monitoring results, stories from participating organizations, and audiovisual content from the process, among other resources.

Awake has also developed a corporate tourism line with purpose, offering companies meeting experiences, board retreats, events, and incentives in nature for those interested in organizational well-being, sustainability, and connection with nature.





Strategic Partnerships

Awake has built a network of strategic partnerships that are fundamental to the development, scaling, and innovation of its regenerative tourism model. These alliances include organizations from the environmental sector as well as financial institutions, international cooperation agencies, and commercial partners. The most notable include: Humboldt Institute, UK PACT, USAID, Acumen, Fundación Bancolombia, Fondo Acción, WWF, Comfama, Compensar, and local host organizations.

These partnerships allow Awake to scale its impact, strengthen local capacities, innovate in tourism-linked conservation, and maintain a sustainable commercial operation aligned with its regeneration purpose.



Business Model

Awake's business model is based on innovation at the intersection of nature tourism, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development in rural communities. Its approach centers on generating economic, social, and environmental value through the commercialization of transformative tourism experiences in strategic rural destinations—especially in areas with high ecological and cultural value.

The model integrates three strategic lines of work:

- 1** Multichannel commercialization of nature-based tourism experiences.
- 2** Capacity building and local business development.
- 3** Enhancement and measurement of biodiversity conservation, restoration, and sustainable use actions through biocultural tourism.

Beyond being a commercial platform, Awake acts as a catalyst for territorial impact. Through partnerships with donors, foundations, and impact investors, it implements projects focused on organizational strengthening, improving tourism offerings, promoting local leadership, and driving conservation and restoration efforts. This component supports initiatives from early stages through to consolidation, expanding their reach and sustainability.

Business growth is directly linked to the impact generated. Awake has positioned itself in both national (70% of clients) and international (30%) markets, with a recent focus on the corporate segment, which seeks wellness, conscious leadership, and sustainability experiences. It has also attracted impact investment (e.g., from Acumen, Fundación Bancolombia, and Fondo Acción), strengthening its operations while advancing toward financial sustainability, tied to organizational self-awareness and insight.



Driving Sustainable Development with Communities

Awake implements technical and organizational support projects in territories with high ecological and social value, assisting initiatives at various stages of maturity. Its work goes beyond commercializing tourism experiences—it includes strengthening community leadership, developing comprehensive tourism products, improving service offerings, and promoting regenerative practices. These efforts aim to consolidate local ecosystems that connect environmental and cultural conservation with community well-being.

Partner organizations become coordination nodes in the tourism value chain through co-creation of products, market access, and institutional strengthening. Awake also fosters the inclusion of other community actors—such as artisans, cooks, transport providers, and local producers—generating economic dynamics that diversify income in these regions.

A distinguishing aspect of Awake's model is its commitment to participatory monitoring and biodiversity impact measurement, using systems implemented by the communities themselves. These tools not only verify compliance with conservation agreements but also empower local actors as stewards of their territories.

In line with its theory of change, Awake focuses its impact not only on local organizations but also on the travelers themselves. The goal is for each experience to foster a connection with one's inner self and with other forms of life, promoting responsible travel and generating both social and environmental positive impact.

In 2023, the company piloted a program to promote social and environmental good practice labels to showcase the positive actions of its allies and encourage more conscious visitor decisions. This strategy seeks to advance a new way of traveling, rooted in co-responsibility, respect for the environment, and recognition of travelers as agents of transformation.



Risks and Critical Success Factors

One of the main risks identified by Awake has been financial sustainability, particularly during the post-pandemic expansion period.

Another significant risk relates to the difficulty of measuring impact across the entire value chain, due to the diversity of actors and geographic dispersion. Although Awake has implemented monitoring and evaluation systems, calculating the indirect impact generated by anchor organizations in their local ecosystems remains a technical and financial challenge—limiting the accuracy of data used for strategic decision-making and impact investor reporting.

Among its critical success factors, three key elements stand out:

Clear and coherent purpose: Awake has maintained its focus on tourism as a tool for conservation and community well-being, aligning its theory of change with commercial operations.

Network of strategic allies: This network has been crucial for innovation, resource mobilization, and capacity building in the territories.

Territorial coordination capacity: Through its network of hosts and anchor organizations, Awake offers integrated tourism products and coordinates conservation, restoration, and participatory monitoring in diverse regions.



Commercial Challenges and Positioning Opportunities

A key challenge for Awake is achieving financial sustainability following a period of rapid growth driven by the pandemic. Although it has reached operational breakeven, it still faces the challenge of maintaining it and ensuring profitable growth aligned with its impact model. To address this, Awake is currently closing a bridge investment round for COP 2 billion, led by Acumen.

The national market, while showing steady and significant growth, does not yield high margins—though it does generate high impact. As a result, over the past two years Awake has been developing business lines targeting international travelers, national and international B2B markets, and the corporate sector—with significant results in 2024 and 2025.

This has led Awake to refocus its strategy toward segments with greater potential for growth, profitability, and stability, such as corporate tourism and international markets. A promising opportunity has been identified in companies looking to integrate well-being, nature connection, and sustainability into their organizational processes—particularly for activities such as board meetings and strategic planning retreats.

From an operational standpoint, another structural challenge is the difficulty in measuring impact across the entire value chain. Although Awake has advanced in implementing a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning system, the high costs of comprehensive measurement limit its ability to capture aggregate data on the impact generated by anchor organizations and their local supplier networks. However, this system also represents an opportunity to strengthen its positioning as an impact enterprise—especially with investors and institutions that value traceability and measurable outcomes.

Despite these challenges, Awake has built clear competitive advantages. Its multichannel commercial infrastructure allows it to market nature tourism initiatives in rural areas—many with conservation purposes. This has been key to anchoring its impact model within a viable market logic, enabling sustainable income for communities in high-ecosystem-pressure zones.

Additionally, its strategic ally network supports innovation, co-creation, and institutional positioning. Through this network, the company has built a distinct and credible narrative around regenerative tourism and its link to the bioeconomy.

Finally, Awake has identified an additional positioning opportunity in creating transformative experiences that emotionally connect travelers to nature. This approach not only generates value for host communities but also promotes deeper environmental awareness among the more than 8,000 travelers who participate in its experiences each year. This quality has been instrumental in strengthening Awake's identity as an impact company and opening new pathways for engagement with public and private agendas promoting responsible tourism, ecological restoration, and territorial regeneration.



Investment Needs

After twelve years of operation and having reached operational breakeven, Awake is now at a key stage to consolidate its financial sustainability and scale its business model. In response to structural challenges arising from its organic growth, the organization is closing a bridge investment round of COP 2 billion. This round is planned as the final one in its expansion phase, securing operations for 2025 and laying the foundation for definitive financial consolidation.

The investment is directed toward four priority areas:

- a** Strengthening the corporate and international markets
- b** Experience design
- c** Technological development
- d** General operations

Together, these investment needs align with a strategic scaling vision that enhances Awake's impact as a regenerative enterprise. Beyond a financial requirement, this represents an opportunity for impact investors to support the maturation of a model that has demonstrated results in generating rural income, conserving biodiversity, and transforming the tourism experience in Colombia.