

AM News

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UN Tourism



Dear Affiliate Members,

I am pleased to introduce the latest edition of the Affiliate Members Newsletter. This monthly publication will keep you updated on the latest news, events, and initiatives related to your membership and the Affiliate Members network. Also included is the calendar of events for 2025, featuring key UN Tourism events.

As we move into the second half of the year, we are preparing for the final Regional Commission of 2025: the 70th UN Tourism Regional Commission for the Americas and Seminar on Artificial Intelligence and Tourism in the Americas, taking place from 31 July to 2 August. We look forward to welcoming a strong participation from Affiliate Members, as seen in the previous regional commissions.

It is also worth highlighting that we are advancing preparations for the elections of the Board of Affiliate Members for the 2026–2029 mandate. The candidacy submission period has now closed, and we are entering the promotion phase, during which candidates will carry out their campaigns until the official election period begins in October. I encourage all Affiliate Members to stay tuned to AMConnected+, where all related updates and documents are available.

We are also pleased to note the positive reception of the new tools available on AMConnected+, including the mobile app, now accessible on both iOS and Android devices.

As 2025 marks the 50th Anniversary of UN Tourism, we look forward to celebrating this milestone with all our members. I encourage you to stay active on AMConnected+, where you can access resources, discover collaboration opportunities, and contribute to shaping the future of tourism together.

The Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department remains fully committed to supporting your initiatives and fostering meaningful partnerships across the network. Please feel free to share your suggestions, ideas, or needs with us at any time.

*Sincerely,
Ion Vilcu
Director*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ion Vilcu', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

AGENDA OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS - EVENTS 2025

UN TOURISM STATUTORY AND HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS

UN TOURISM GENERAL ASSEMBLY & EXECUTIVE COUNCILS

29-30 May	<u>123rd Executive Council</u>	Segovia, Spain
Nov. (TBC)	124th Executive Council	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
7-11 Nov.	26th UN Tourism General Assembly	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Nov. (TBC)	45th Affiliate Members Plenary Session	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

UN TOURISM REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

11-13 Feb.	<u>51st Regional Commission for the Middle East</u>	Doha, Qatar
15-16 April	<u>37th Joint Meeting of East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia</u>	Jakarta, Indonesia
4-6 June	<u>71st Regional Commission for Europe</u>	Baku, Azerbaijan
11-13 June	<u>68th Regional Commission for Africa</u>	Abuja, Nigeria
31 July-2 Aug.	<u>70th Regional Commission for the Americas</u>	Lima, Peru

BOARD OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS

29 May	61st Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members	Segovia, Spain
11 Nov. (TBC)	62nd Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members	TBC

COMMITTEE ON MATTERS RELATED TO AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP

29 May	7th Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)	Segovia, Spain
8 Nov. (TBC)	8th Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)	

UN TOURISM/AM-PPC THEMATIC EVENTS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS

8-10 April	2nd UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit	Livingstone, Zambia,
23-25 April	2nd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa	Arusha, Tanzania
28-29 April	Expo Japan Women Pavillion: Empowering Innovation, Investment, and Inclusion	Osaka, Japan
12-13 May	World Tourism Forum Prague 2025	Prague, Czech Republic
24-25 June	UN Tourism Global Forum on Urban Tourism: Shaping the Future of Urban Tourism	Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
22-24 July	2nd UN Tourism and ICAO Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air Transport in Africa	Luanda, Angola
27 Sept.	World Tourism Day 2025	Melaka, Malaysia
6-7 Oct.	9th UN Tourism Global Wine Tourism Conference	Plovdiv, Bulgaria
Oct. (TBC)	10th UN Tourism World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism	San Sebastian, Spain
2-6 Dec.	III International Seminar on Tourism Law	La Habana, Cuba

Sports Tourism Takes Center Stage at the Sports Summit Madrid 2025

IFEMA Madrid hosted the first edition of the Sports Summit Madrid 2025, an international event that brought together over 5,000 professionals, 200 brands, 120 exhibiting companies, and 150 leading global speakers. Organized by MADCUP, an Affiliate Member of UN Tourism, the event positions itself as a new global benchmark at the intersection of sports, innovation, sustainability, and tourism.

As an official partner of the event, UN Tourism had a highly prominent presence, reaffirming its commitment to the development of sports tourism and its support for platforms that foster knowledge generation, the exchange of best practices, and the creation of business opportunities.

During the opening ceremony, UN Tourism shared its vision of the transformative role of sports tourism and the strategic importance this segment holds within the Organization's agenda.

UN Tourism also led a panel titled "Sport and Tourism: Strategies for a Sustainable Legacy", featuring Affiliate Members and other key entities. The panel addressed key topics such as the rise of sports tourism, the role of air transport, the personalization of active experiences, and the need for sustainable strategies; Director Vilcu shared insights into the remarkable global growth of sports tourism, the main trends driving it, and recommendations for destinations looking to strengthen their position in this sector.

Several Affiliate Members were present at the fair, including: MADRID CULTURA Y TURISMO SAU, MADRID DESTINO CULTURA, TURISMO Y NEGOCIO S.A., World Football Summit, Iberia, the Tourism Promotion Trust of the State of Nayarit, Egeda, Plenitas, Universidad Católica de Murcia – UCAM, the Public Company for the Management of Tourism and Sports of Andalusia, S.A., CEOE, and Allianz Partners.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



Episode 10 of the ATREVIA-UN Tourism Podcast “ON THE GO” is now available

The Affiliate Member ATREVIA and UN Tourism are jointly producing a series of podcast episodes that address current events, trends, and challenges in the tourism sector with the participation of managers and experts as well as representatives of companies and relevant public entities in the sector, and Affiliate Members who are leading specific areas of the tourism industry.

The objective of the podcast is to highlight the valuable knowledge, information, and best practices for the sector of our Affiliate Members, reaching a wide and diverse audience thanks to the potential offered by a dynamic format such as this series of podcasts.

In the context of Pride Season, this episode explores the evolving landscape of LGBT+ tourism—its progress, persistent challenges, and the role of the tourism industry in creating truly inclusive destinations.

- How the LGBT+ travel experience has changed over the past decade
- What travelers are looking for in 2025: safety, authenticity, and inclusion
- The risks of pinkwashing and the need for real commitment from destinations
- How the industry can move from marketing to meaningful action

Speakers:

- Iván España – Account Director, ATREVIA (moderator)
- Nano García – Project Director, Red Española de Destinos por la Diversidad
- Auston Matta – Marketing Director, IGLTA (Affiliate Member)

You can find more information [HERE](#)



AM-PPC NEWS

AMConnected+: Learn how to schedule content within the platform

Are you a UN Tourism Affiliate Member new to the AMConnected+ platform, and willing to make the most out of this network?

Do you have news or an event you'd like to share on the Affiliate Members' platform, but can't always be online?

With the content scheduling feature on AMConnected+, you can choose exactly when your post goes live—no need to be in front of your computer or mobile device! Take advantage of this tool to manage your time more efficiently and stay active within the Affiliate Members' network, even when you're busy with other priorities.

Watch these videos to learn how it works and start scheduling your posts with ease:

Click on the links below to find out more:

- [Learn how to schedule content within the platform \(ENG\)](#)
- [Learn how to schedule content within the platform \(ESP\)](#)

If you have any doubts, the Thematic Channel “First Steps” provides the main guidelines on how to use the platform. Access it [HERE](#)

And do not forget, your community guides are available to assist you. You can reach out to them: [HERE](#)

AMConnected+, the exclusive Affiliate Members platform, now has its own smartphone app. It is available for iOS and Android under the name “AMConnected+.”

See you on AMConnected+!



AMConnected+

Stay connected on the go!

Download the new AMConnected+ App on your phone.

iOS:



Android:



Save the Date

Networking Event & Regional Meeting of Affiliate Members

When:

- 30 July, from 19:00 – **Welcome & Networking Event for Affiliate Members**
- 31 July, 16:00-18:00 – **Regional Meeting of Affiliate Members**
“Tourism in the Americas: Inspiring Best Cases”

Where: Real InterContinental Lima Miraflores

These events, dedicated to UN Tourism Affiliate Members, are organized within the ideal framework of the 70th Regional Commission for the Americas, to highlight the valuable contribution of affiliated entities to UN Tourism’s mission and the development of the tourism sector. The programme will include:

- A **welcome and networking social event**, with the participation of government delegates and Affiliate Members from the Americas, aimed at facilitating and encouraging exchange and collaboration in an informal and relaxed setting.
- A **regional meeting of Affiliate Members**, focused on the presentation of good practices in sustainable tourism.

Why participate?

- Meet and exchange ideas with other Affiliate Members
- Discover new activities and projects
- Expand your professional network

Confirm your participation via email to:
am@unwto.org

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UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

UN Tourism Commission for Africa Meets to Boost Social Impact, Innovation, and Youth Empowerment

The UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa (CAF), brought together more than 300 delegates, including 18 Ministers of Tourism, reflecting the high-level support for UN Tourism's work and vision for the region.

Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili opened the 68th session with a call to action rooted in partnership and progress. Reflecting on his first visit to Abuja in 2018, he noted that "progress is built on partnership and Africa's story is one of resilience and renewal." He lauded the region's rapid recovery in tourism, driven by streamlined protocols, digital innovation, and targeted skill development, and reaffirmed commitment to the Agenda for Africa: Tourism for Inclusive Growth.

Key highlights of this shared progress include:

- The launch of the Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa, in partnership with Morocco,

- A strong emphasis on creative industries, music, film, fashion, and cuisine, as drivers of culture-led tourism,
- New courses, academy launches in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and expansive training and entrepreneurship programmes.

Africa's Member States fulfilled their statutory obligations with elections to key positions that will guide UN Tourism's work forward over the coming years:

- Angola; Kenya; Seychelles; Zambia; Zimbabwe will serve on the UN Tourism Executive Council (2025-2029)
- Nigeria and Zimbabwe will serve as Vice-Presidents of the UN Tourism General Assembly (2025)
- Zambia will Chair the Regional Commission for Africa (2025-2027), with Angola and Nigeria the Vice-Chairs

Looking ahead, Seychelles will host the 69th Meeting of the UN Tourism Commission for Africa (date TBC). Cabo Verde will then host the official celebrations for World Tourism Day 2027.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

UN Tourism and Croatia sign agreements to advance sustainable tourism development, research and innovation

UN Tourism has agreed to partner with the Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Croatia and the University of Zagreb on research and innovation in sustainable tourism development and the creation of a Sustainable Tourism Awards.

New agreements signed during an official visit of the UN Tourism Secretary-General to the country include the cooperation with the newly established Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism at the University of Zagreb, which will serve as a knowledge hub for research and policy development, and the organization of a Sustainable Tourism Awards.

The new Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism at the University of Zagreb will address a growing demand from UN Tourism's Member States for applied, action-oriented research.

The Sustainable Tourism Awards, to be launched in Croatia later this year, represent an additional recognition for destinations across the country. The initiative complements Croatia's broader ambition to transform destinations and the national tourism model, responding proactively to external pressures while staying focused on long-term community benefits. Croatia has undertaken enormous efforts in recent years, including through new legislation, to invest in smart, inclusive and long-term tourism policies that prioritize local well-being, economic resilience and cultural heritage protection.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

Tourism Rises to the Ocean Challenge at UNOC3: A Unified Call for a Blue Transformation

At the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), tourism emerged as a major actor in shaping a sustainable and resilient ocean economy. With oceans under unprecedented pressure from climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss, stakeholders from across the tourism sector met to launch new partnerships, align financing mechanisms, and scale up initiatives and action to regenerate marine ecosystems and support coastal communities.

The momentum was driven by the high-level side event “Blue Tourism: Advancing Sustainable and Resilient Ocean Economies for People and Planet,” convened by UN Tourism and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) under the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme.

UN Tourism also joined the multi-agency co-design process of the One Ocean Finance Facility, a bold new effort to redirect capital from ocean-dependent industries—including tourism—into sustainable blue economy solutions.

Also at the Blue Economy and Finance Forum, the Ocean Tourism Pact was launched marking a milestone in global cooperation for ocean-positive tourism. Facilitated by the French Government, IDDRI, and the Ocean & Climate Platform and supported by UN Tourism and UNEP under the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, the Pact aims to establish a Coastal and Maritime Tourism Working Group, as well as to accelerate the implementation of tourism sector commitments, such as the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative.

You can find more information [**HERE**](#)



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Risk Management for Outdoor Programs Online Training

Viristar's Risk Management for Outdoor Programs course offers a comprehensive training in safety management for outdoor, wilderness, travel, field-based, adventure, and related programs.

This 40-hour course covers theoretical models of incident causation and prevention, safety standards, and detailed procedures for helping prevent and mitigate incidents.

The curriculum addresses risk assessment and safety management practices, an overview of general legal principles, and adventure activity standards and good practice guides.

Graduates complete the course with valuable, practical skills and expert guidance for improving safety at their organization.

Upcoming Course Dates

Courses are offered monthly on the following dates:

- August 6 - September 3, 2025
- September 3 - October 1, 2025
- October 1 - 29, 2025
- November 5 - December 3, 2025
- December 3 - 31, 2025

Additional Services Offered by Viristar

- [Adventure Safety Accreditation](#)
- [Risk Management Review](#)
- [Incident Review](#)
- [Safety Systems Development](#)



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AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

How TOPOSOPHY is helping Timișoara build on its legacy of European Capital of Culture

At TOPOSOPHY, we bring together rigorous research, creativity, and care for local communities to deliver sustainable visitor economy solutions as distinctive as the places we serve. Our team blends tourism, place development, market research, and place marketing to build strategies and experiences that resonate with residents and travellers alike.

Our ongoing collaboration with the team at Visit Timișoara is a clear reflection of this approach. Commissioned to support the city following its landmark year as European Capital of Culture 2023, we conducted an in-depth mixed-method research for the city, exploring resident sentiment, digital presence, local stakeholder engagement, visitor experience gaps, and local tourism assets mapping. We also benchmarked Timișoara against a carefully curated group of cities in Eastern and Central Europe to uncover opportunities for differentiation and innovation.

The outcome of this work is a set of practical insights that help the city embed tourism in its holistic city narrative, giving a clear picture of the city's tourism and place potentials and directly informing upcoming destination management strategic decisions. This piece of work will help enhance Timișoara's international and national visibility, sharpen cultural experience offers, and shape a future-ready visitor experience that celebrates the city's evolving identity.

From reinforcing creative assets to strengthening the DMO's role in destination leadership, our work empowers the city to act with clarity and purpose. This builds on our growing body of work across Europe, including strategy development for Visit Belfast and Glasgow 2030 Tourism, where we've supported narrative alignment, long-term planning, and participatory visioning processes.

Explore the full story behind Visit Timișoara and discover how TOPOSOPHY helps cities stand out, stay relevant, and connect meaningfully with their audiences.

TOPOSOPHY
PLACE MAKING & MARKETING AGENCY



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

CrescentRating and Mastercard Launch 10th Global Muslim Travel Index, Championing a More Inclusive and Sustainable Future

CrescentRating, a UN Tourism Affiliate Member, in its long-standing partnership with Mastercard, just released the 10th edition of the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2025. For over a decade, the GMTI has served as the premier benchmark for the global travel industry, providing invaluable data-driven insights into one of the world's fastest-growing tourism sectors.

The Muslim travel market has demonstrated a robust recovery, with international arrivals reaching an estimated 176 million in 2024, a 10% increase over pre-pandemic levels. Projections show this dynamic market expanding to 245 million arrivals with an expenditure of USD 235 billion by 2030, highlighting a significant opportunity for destinations worldwide.

This landmark 2025 report moves beyond traditional metrics to champion a more holistic vision for tourism.

A key focus is the critical alignment of our RIDA (Responsible, Immersive, Digital, Assured) framework with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introducing the new RIDA Impact Score (RIS) to measure how effectively tourism services embody these principles

Reinforcing the global commitment to accessible tourism, this year's index places a dedicated spotlight on the needs of neurodivergent travelers and active seniors, offering practical pathways for creating a welcoming environment for all. The findings also reveal a key trend: a competitive rise among non-OIC destinations like Singapore, the UK, and Hong Kong, which are strategically enhancing their infrastructure and services to attract Muslim travelers.

As an essential resource for tourism boards, policymakers, and industry stakeholders, the GMTI 2025 provides a data-driven roadmap to navigate this dynamic sector responsibly and sustainably. Download the full report here: <https://www.crescentrating.com/global-muslim-travel-index-gmti.html>



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Record-Breaking for the Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards!

We are thrilled to share that the 2025 Sustainable Tourism Awards has received an exceptional response, with 106 entries from 30 countries across the globe. This overwhelming participation reflects Skål International's growing commitment to sustainability in tourism and promoting responsible and innovative tourism practices.

This year's edition features eight newly renovated award categories, and the quality and diversity of submissions are truly inspiring. Our esteemed panel of judges is now carefully reviewing each entry to identify the most impactful and forward-thinking initiatives.

We are especially proud to highlight the incredible work of all our entrants. Their dedication to sustainability deserves recognition, and we are committed to giving them the visibility they deserve. As part of this, we are sharing the full list of participants, along with their logos, to showcase the global momentum behind sustainable tourism.

Participants list [HERE](#)

We are also honored to count on the support of prestigious partners, which amplifies the reach and impact of these awards:

- [UN Tourism](#) provides Skål International with global platforms to promote the STA program and its winners, showcasing exemplary "best practices" for other institutions, companies, and countries to emulate in fostering a sustainable future.
- [Biosphere Tourism](#) and [Responsible Tourism Institute](#) since 2018. They award each winner with the "Skål/Biosphere Sustainable Special Award" consisting of a one-year free subscription to the Biosphere Sustainable platform, to create their own personalized page
- [Sustainable Travel International](#) also joins Skål International for the close cooperation in this awards program.

The winners will be announced on 26 September during the Opening Ceremony of the 84th Skål International World Congress to be held in Cusco, Peru.

For more information about Skål International and the upcoming awards ceremony, please visit <https://skal.org/sta-winners> or contact awards@skal.org.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Diriyah Company marks progress with Asaan Groundbreaking, King Saud University infrastructure deal, and GoZahid partnership

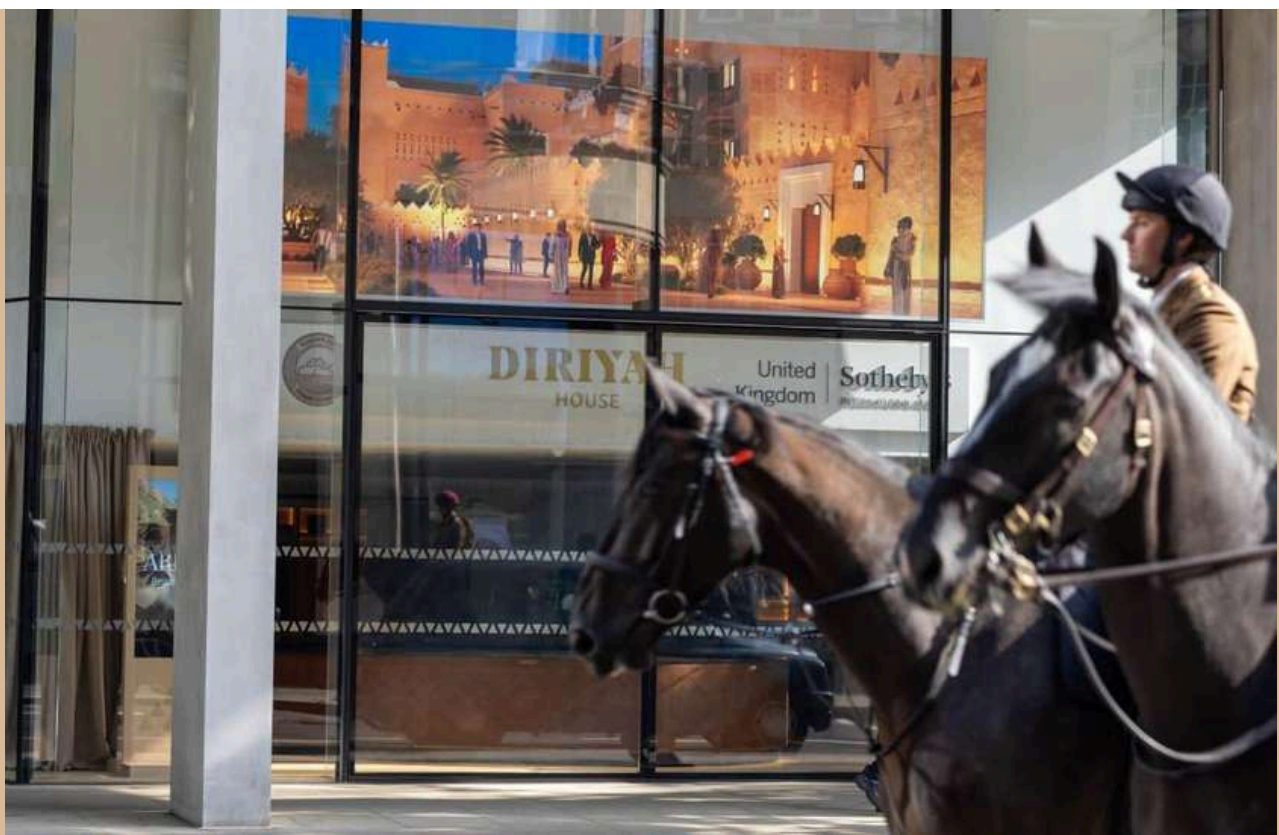
This May, Diriyah Company marked several milestones reflecting its dynamic role in shaping Saudi Arabia's cultural and urban future.

To mark International Museum Day, the Asaan Heritage Museum broke ground in the northern district of Diriyah. The 40,000 square meter museum is dedicated to preserving Saudi heritage and celebrating its authenticity and diversity. It will offer immersive exhibitions, interactive spaces, and cultural programs that bring to life the stories, crafts, and traditions that have shaped generations.

At the same time, Diriyah Company announced the award of a \$1.13 billion (SAR4.225 billion) contract to relocate King Saud University's utilities and administration offices within the Diriyah masterplan.

The contract, granted to a joint venture led by China Railway Construction Corporation's Saudi branch, includes the design and construction of major infrastructure such as a district cooling plant, sewage treatment facilities, and support buildings. This brings the total value of awarded contracts in 2025 to over \$2.9 billion.

On the global stage, Diriyah Company also signed a travel trade agreement with GoZahid to promote Diriyah as a premier destination. Their partnership will focus on enhancing destination marketing, training tour operators, hosting destination workshops, and developing training manuals for tour guides. The partnership was announced during the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai, where Diriyah was showcased alongside key tourism partners, reflecting its growing presence in international travel and cultural dialogue.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Registration Now Open: ABAV Expo 2025 in Rio de Janeiro!

Registration is officially open for ABAV Expo - Latin America's premier tourism trade show. This year marks the 52nd edition of the event, taking place from October 8th to 10th, 2025, at Riocentro in Rio de Janeiro. Organized by the Brazilian Association of Travel Agencies (ABAV), ABAV Expo is the must-attend event for tourism professionals seeking new business opportunities, valuable connections, and the latest insights into the dynamic tourism market.

With both domestic and international tourism on the rise, ABAV Expo has firmly established itself as the essential meeting point for travel agents, destinations, tour operators, airlines, hotel chains, technology companies, and countless other industry players. Imagine over 2,000 exhibiting brands spread across an impressive 40,000 square meters of event space! A special highlight this year is the Buyers Club program, designed to foster connections with global source markets.

Beyond generating business, ABAV Expo is also a fantastic learning hub. The ABAV Talks program offers a rich schedule of lectures, workshops, and panels featuring industry experts.

You'll gain valuable knowledge on topics like technological innovations, emerging tourism trends, consumer behavior, and effective market strategies.

Networking is a major draw at this B2B trade show. The event brings together thousands of participants from every corner of Brazil and beyond, creating an unparalleled environment for forging partnerships and launching new projects. Plus, accredited participants enjoy exclusive perks, including discounts on airfare, accommodation, and local transportation during the event.

ABAV Nacional, the organizing force behind ABAV Expo, is Brazil's most influential entity for travel agencies, boasting over 2,300 member companies across all states. Since 2024, the association is one of the Affiliate Member of UN Tourism, solidifying its strategic presence on the global stage.

Ready to join? Register today at www.abavexpo.com.br!



The travel agent's trade show



October 8-10



Riocentro, Rio de Janeiro

www.abavexpo.com.br

AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

SHTM Heralds the World's First Master's in AI for Hospitality

The School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University proudly presents the World's first Master of Science (MSc) in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Hospitality—a pioneering programme designed to meet the global demand for visionary leaders who can harness AI to transform the hospitality and tourism industry. As AI continues to reshape customer experiences, streamline operations, and redefine business models, this programme aims to equip students with essential skills and knowledge in advanced AI technologies, ultimately helping them succeed in the AI-empowered industry.

What Sets This Programme Apart?

The MSc in AI in Hospitality stands out with four distinctive features:

- Specialised AI for hospitality – Gain first-hand knowledge of AI-driven personalisation, dynamic pricing and operational efficiency in hospitality and tourism.
- Advanced generative AI and natural language processing – Train in cutting-edge AI tools for multimedia creation, customer interactions and automated service delivery.

- Data intelligence and decision-making – Learn to derive actionable business insights and support strategic decision-making through data.
- Hands-on hotel consultancy projects – Apply acquired knowledge in real-world consultancy projects.

Specialised AI Curriculum

Students will complete four AI-specialised courses designed specifically for hospitality applications:

- AI for hospitality: Foundations, applications, and ethics – Explore the fundamentals of AI and its ethical applications in hospitality.
- Machine learning and emerging technologies in hospitality – Discover how machine learning, IoT, blockchain and robotics drive innovation in the industry.
- Big data analytics and intelligence in hospitality – Analyse big data to support strategic decisions and gain competitive advantage.
- AI-powered service design for hospitality – Integrate AI with service design principles to create innovative, customer-centric solutions.

Applications open on 2 July 2025. Look no further than this programme to shape your future at the intersection of AI and hospitality innovation! Scan the QR code to learn more.

THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
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AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Religious Travel Trends in Saudi Arabia: Pilgrimage to Mecca 2025

According to Mabrian's latest data, over 151.6 million airline seats are scheduled for travel to Mecca during Hajj 2025, + 1.2 million seats comparing to 2024 festivities. This substantial capacity reflects a significant surge in religious travel, highlighting Saudi Arabia's role as the primary global hub for pilgrimage.

Mabrian emphasizes that this increase in seat availability is not coincidental. It results from ongoing strategic efforts by Saudi authorities to streamline pilgrim logistics and increase travel demand to meet both religious obligations and economic targets. By strengthening air connectivity and operating targeted travel programs, the Kingdom is ensuring efficient and accessible pilgrimage.

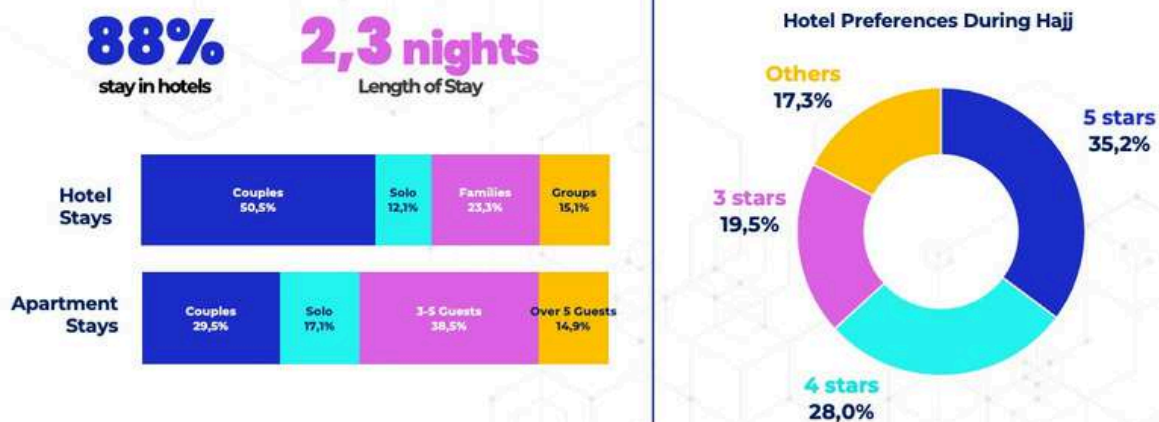
Additionally, leveraging data-driven insights enables more accurate forecasting of travel flows—crucial for managing crowd levels, optimizing service deployment, and safeguarding health and safety during peak times. The substantial rise in seat capacity is also evidence of the Kingdom's broader investment in infrastructure modernization and digital transformation, reinforcing its commitment to improving the pilgrim experience.

In summary, Mabrian's analysis reveals that the Hajj 2025 event will be one of the most logistically significant religious travel operations to date. Through data-driven capacity expansion, Saudi Arabia is embracing digital intelligence and infrastructure upgrades to create safer, more efficient, and predictable pilgrimage experiences.



Religious Travellers' Profile: Mecca Pilgrims

Visitors' Profile. Travellers Visiting Mecca, Saudi Arabia During Hajj in 2024.
June 14th-19th 2024



Source: Mabrian Travel Intelligence

AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

GreenWorking Awards: A New Era for Sustainable Tourism Advertising

A new international awards initiative is set to redefine the standards of tourism promotion. The GreenWorking Awards, created by CIFFT and normmal, with the participation of UN Tourism, aims to recognize and reward tourism campaigns that integrate sustainability as message and practice, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The GreenWorking Awards feature three categories that reflect key dimensions of sustainability in tourism campaigns: GreenWorking Production Award, GreenWorking Message Award, and GreenWorking Global Award.

Alexander V. Kammel, CIFFT Director, emphasizes: "The GreenWorking Awards set a vital precedent by recognizing tourism campaigns that embed sustainable practices at their core, not just in their messaging but throughout their production. This is essential for driving real change in an industry that significantly impacts communities and the environment worldwide."

Alberto Fernández, CEO of normmal, adds:

"We created the Greenworking Awards together with CIFFT and UN Tourism because I am convinced that the future of tourism depends on narratives—and productions—that respect our planet and its communities. At normal, sustainability is our guiding light, and with these partners I'm proud to highlight campaigns and productions that embody genuine environmental and social responsibility."

Ion Vilcu, Director of the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department at UN Tourism, affirms: "At UN Tourism, we recognize the power of audiovisual storytelling to shape a more sustainable tourism industry. The GreenWorking Awards represent a forward-thinking approach to tourism promotion—one that values not only what we communicate, but how we create it. By encouraging environmentally and socially responsible production, this initiative sets a new standard for meaningful and impactful storytelling in our sector."

Submissions are open until September 15 at www.cifft.com. Winners will be announced in November during the World Tourism Film Awards.

A banner image for the GreenWorking Awards. It shows a person crouching on a rocky outcrop, looking down at a camera or equipment. The background is a vast, hazy landscape of rolling hills and valleys. The text "GREENWORKING AWARDS" is overlaid on the image. "GREENWORKING" is in a large, white, sans-serif font, with a stylized sunburst icon replacing the letter 'O'. "AWARDS" is in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. A bright green sunburst icon is also visible in the bottom right corner of the image.

GREENWORKING
AWARDS

AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Positioning and Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for Arcos De Valdevez

The new Positioning and Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for Arcos de Valdevez was recently presented — a project coordinated and developed by IPDT – Tourism.

The strategy was designed to structure the region's tourism offer, create mechanisms to enhance attractiveness, and consolidate a sustainable tourism development model. Through extensive field visits and a participatory methodology — which involved listening to and engaging local stakeholders — it was possible to identify the main challenges and propose tailored solutions.

The destination is anchored in two strategic and highly distinctive tourism positionings: “Arcos de Valdevez: Gateway to the Peneda-Gerês National Park” and “Arcos de Valdevez: Where Portugal Was Forged”.

With a vision set for 2030, the aim is to position Arcos de Valdevez as a premier nature destination, offering the best cultural programming in the country and serving as the main gateway to the Peneda-Gerês National Park.

To achieve this, ten strategic goals have been defined, focused on key challenges such as increasing the average length of stay, boosting international demand and visitor spending, and reducing seasonality.

To guide future action, a Tourism Development Model was devised, promoting the dispersion of visitor flows throughout the territory via the establishment of visit clusters. Nature is the anchor product of the destination, complemented by history, culture, gastronomy, and wine. Located within the Peneda-Gerês National Park — designated a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve — the territory stands out for its rich biodiversity, with fauna and flora species of high ecological and scientific value, all set within a preserved and authentic landscape.

The strategy document also includes a detailed Action Plan, structured into four operational programmes, along with a continuous monitoring model. IPDT embraced this project with great enthusiasm, adopting an innovative approach guided by principles of quality, authenticity, and long-term sustainability.



**POSITIONING AND
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR ARCOS DE VALDEVEZ**
2025-2030



The UN Tourism Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department is responsible for the management of the partnership between UN Tourism and the public and private sectors.

Contact us at: am@unwto.org

*UNprecedented Perspectives
by UN Tourism Affiliate Members*