

AM News

VOL. 80 - September 2025



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 final quarter of the year, we turn our attention to one of the most important moments on the global tourism calendar: **World Tourism Day**, celebrated annually on 27 September. This year's theme highlights tourism's transformative potential as an agent of positive change. Realizing this potential requires more than growth—it demands good governance, strategic planning, robust monitoring, and clear priority setting aligned with long-term sustainability goals.*

*We are also pleased to announce that registration for the **26th UN Tourism General Assembly** is now open. In this context, several dedicated initiatives and events for Affiliate Members will be held, including the **45th Plenary Session of Affiliate Members**, the most important statutory meeting of the Affiliate Membership.*

Preparations are also advancing for the elections of the Board of Affiliate Members for the 2026–2029 mandate. With the candidacy submission period now closed, we are entering the promotion phase, during which candidates will carry out their campaigns ahead of the official election period in October. I encourage all Affiliate Members to stay informed via AMConnected+, where all related updates and documents are available.

We are also pleased to see 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 of you. I encourage you to remain 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
7-11 Nov.	<u>26th UN Tourism General Assembly</u>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
7 Nov.	45th Affiliate Members Plenary Session	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
8 Nov.	124th Executive Council	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
11 Nov.	125th Executive Council	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.	62nd Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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.	8th Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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
1-3 Dec.	10th UN Tourism World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism	Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain
2-6 Dec.	III International Seminar on Tourism Law	La Habana, Cuba

AFFILIATE MEMBERS AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION DEPARTMENT'S EVENTS/INITIATIVES

8 Nov.	Affiliate Members Corner	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
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AM-PPC NEWS

Strengthening Ties in the Americas: Key Moments from Director Vilcu's Visit to Argentina

As part of his official mission to Argentina, Ion Vilcu, Director of the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department (AM-PPC), took part in a series of high-level events and meetings that showcased the growing engagement of Affiliate Members in the region and their contributions to tourism development.

Regional Meeting of Affiliate Members – Buenos Aires

Organized by the Argentine Chamber of Tourism (CAT), in its capacity as Vice-President of the Board of Affiliate Members, the Regional Meeting brought together key stakeholders to exchange ideas, share best practices, and strengthen public-private collaboration.

Director Vilcu opened the session alongside Laura Teruel, newly appointed President of CAT,

and provided an update on recent developments in the Affiliate Membership area.

HOTELGA 2025 – Buenos Aires

Director Vilcu attended the opening of HOTELGA, a flagship event for the hospitality and gastronomy sectors, organized by Affiliate Members FEHGRA and AHT. The event served as a platform for innovation, dialogue, and public-private cooperation in tourism.

Mountain & Snow Tourism Conference – San Martín de los Andes

At the 2nd Mountain and Snow Tourism Conference of the Americas, Director Vilcu delivered a keynote on the role of sports tourism as a driver of diversification and sustainable development. He also highlighted UN Tourism's commitment to this segment through initiatives such as the World Sports Tourism Congress.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



Save the Date: World Tourism Day 2025

World Tourism Day 2025 highlights tourism's transformative potential as an agent of positive change. Realizing this potential, however, demands more than growth alone. It requires good governance, strategic planning, robust monitoring and clear priority setting that align with long-term sustainability goals.

Tourism is more than an economic sector, it is a catalyst for social progress, delivering education, employment and creating new opportunities for all. To unlock these benefits, a deliberate and inclusive approach is essential, one that places sustainability, resilience and social equity at the core of tourism development and decision-making.

Sustainable tourism transformation must begin with effective governance and people-centric planning. Investment in education and skills, especially for youth, women, and communities at risk of exclusion, is crucial.

These should be tailored to the evolving needs of the tourism sector and empower individuals to excel and contribute meaningfully to our collective progress. Tourism must also be powered by strategic innovation and responsible entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, sustainable investments are also a powerful lever for transformation. Between 2019 and 2024, the sector attracted over 2,300 greenfield FDI projects, representing USD 126 billion in investment. Tourism stakeholders must proactively address their impact by significantly reducing emissions, conserving biodiversity, and investing in resilient infrastructure to safeguard our natural resources and ecosystems.

This World Tourism Day issues a clear and urgent call: let us commit to making tourism a platform for systemic and sustainable transformation, guided by effective governance, strategic planning, rigorous monitoring, and clear collective priorities.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



**WORLD
TOURISM
DAY 2025**
**TOURISM AND
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSFORMATION**

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:



UPCOMING EVENTS



UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

UN Tourism Regional Commission for the Americas Holds Seminar on “Artificial Intelligence and Tourism in the Americas”

UN Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru, successfully held the 70th meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for the Americas.

During the inauguration, the strategic importance of this meeting to address the current and future challenges of regional tourism was highlighted, as well as the need to promote public policies that foster innovation, environmental sustainability, and economic recovery. The participants exchanged experiences, analysed global trends, and defined joint lines of action to strengthen tourism development in member countries.

This meeting brought together official representatives, experts, and leaders of the region's tourism sector, strengthening dialogue and cooperation to promote sustainable, inclusive, and competitive tourism in the Americas.

As a prelude to the meeting, the Seminar ‘Artificial Intelligence and Tourism in the Americas’ was held on 31 July, with the participation of leading experts in technology, innovation, and tourism. This space offered a platform to explore the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on the tourism sector, from improving the traveller experience to optimizing tourism management and promotion.

The 70th meeting of the Regional Commission culminated with the renewed commitment of the Members to continue working together in the promotion of tourism as a key driver for the economic and social development of the Americas, integrating new technologies and innovative practices that respond to the demands of the current market.

The next meeting of the Regional Commission will be held in Paraguay next year.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

Tourism Highlighted as Driver of Structural Transformation at Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

Tourism was in the spotlight as a powerful lever for structural transformation at the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3).

Hosted by UN Tourism, the side event “Tourism: Driving Economic Diversification and Inclusion in LLDCs,” brought together government representatives, UN agencies, and bilateral development actors to explore how sustainable and rural tourism can diversify economies and boost social inclusion across landlocked developing nations.

According to UN Tourism, LLDCs welcomed 50 million international tourism arrivals in 2024, or around 3.5% of the global total. However, their share of international tourism export revenues stood at just 1.4%, pointing to untapped potential and a need for resource mobilization, enhanced value, and policy innovation to grow the average income per arrival, which currently stands at USD 445 in LLDCs compared to USD 1,182 worldwide.

In the priority areas of the Awaza Programme of Action (APoA) 2024-2034, tourism plays a significant role for LLDCs, specifically when it comes to structural transformation, private sector development, foreign direct investment, transit, transport, and connectivity. Among the tourism-related targets to be achieved by 2034, the Programme of Action commits to doubling the output of service sectors, including tourism, while fostering cross-sectoral linkages between tourism, agriculture, creative, and cultural sectors.

The event featured a high-level panel with representatives from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Together, they discussed best practice policies and initiatives to accelerate sustainable tourism development in LLDCs.

The event concluded with a presentation on UN Tourism’s Tourism for Rural Development Programme, which is designed to accelerate tourism as a driver for rural development and community well-being.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Risk Management for Outdoor Programs Online Training

Join a growing network of Risk Management for Outdoor Programs alumni in over 75 countries and territories on six continents.

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.

2025 Course Dates

- October 1 - 29, 2025
- November 5 - December 3, 2025
- December 3 - 31, 2025

2026 Course Dates

- January 7 - February 4, 2026
- February 4 - March 4, 2026
- March 4 - April 2, 2026

Enroll in a course at <https://www.viristar.com/course/risk-management-for-outdoor-programs/>

Additional Services Offered by Viristar

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



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AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Belo Horizonte Gastronomy Biennial 2025

The Belo Horizonte Gastronomy Biennial returns for its second edition in 2025, reaffirming the city's position as an international reference in the culinary scene. Organized by the Municipality of Belo Horizonte through Belotur, the Biennial celebrates local food culture, strengthens tourism, and advances the commitments made to UNESCO after the city was designated a Creative City of Gastronomy.

Launched as a pilot project in 2021 in a virtual format and restructured in 2023 with a new name and concept, the Biennial is now established as a strategic and innovative event. Each edition broadens dialogue among chefs, producers, researchers, and audiences, building bridges between tradition and innovation. It highlights ancestral knowledge, local and peripheral cuisines, women's leadership, and food diversity.

In 2025, the program expands with immersive and decentralized experiences across markets and urban spaces.

More than a culinary event, the Biennial positions gastronomy as a cultural, political, and social expression that connects territory, identity, and future.

From October 15 to 31, 2025, Belo Horizonte will host a rich program featuring tastings, debates, artistic performances, and cultural activities. A highlight will be the International Gastronomy Forum, taking place on October 21 and 22, which will bring together leading voices from Brazil and abroad to discuss innovation, sustainability, and inclusion in gastronomy.

By showcasing its creativity and hospitality, Belo Horizonte strengthens its role in the global network of Creative Cities and shares with the world the richness of its food culture, where flavors tell stories of heritage, resilience, and imagination.

More information:
<https://portalbelohorizonte.com.br/bienaldagastronomia>



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Towards a Framework for Smart Destinations: Living Labs and Open Innovation as Transformational Drivers

Smart Tourism Destinations are a key strategy for addressing contemporary tourism challenges through the integration of technology, sustainability, accessibility, governance, and innovation as core components. In this regard, open innovation plays a central role by fostering collaboration among multiple players in the tourism field (governments, businesses, universities, citizens, and visitors) to develop common and relevant solutions. Open innovation, far from being a linear process, has exponential effects when inserted in real scenarios of analysis and co-creation.

Living Labs provide spaces for testing, validating, and scaling innovations in real-life situations, with the participation of multiple stakeholders. Often, their participatory and transdisciplinary nature makes them appropriate environments for implementing open innovation in several sectors. Indeed, there is evidence that in countries that have promoted this kind of specialized laboratories, such as Finland, Spain, and the Netherlands, a high presence of smart destinations has been identified, which suggests a direct relationship between open innovation environments and the development of smart destinations.

Therefore, this empirical correlation highlights the need to explore the theoretical connections linking these concepts.

To address this gap, a systematic literature review was carried out following the PRISMA approach, identifying and including 21 scientific papers from specialized databases. The analysis allowed the identification of common concepts and underlying relationships between smart tourism destinations, open innovation, and Living Labs. The findings helped to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework based on the theory of smart cities.

The framework provides a robust theoretical background to visualize how Living Labs act as catalysts of open innovation processes for the development of smart destinations, enabling constant adaptation to needs and promoting resilient, inclusive, and sustainable tourism destinations. Likewise, it guides both future research and the design of public policies and instruments for smart tourism governance.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

5th IACTS Biennial Conference Celebrates Decade of Excellence in China Tourism Research in Hong Kong

The 5th biennial conference of the International Association for China Tourism Studies (IACTS) was successfully held in Hong Kong from 4-7 August 2025. Hosted by the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) and sponsored by the Research Centre for Digital Transformation of Tourism (RCdTT) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), the event marked a significant milestone in advancing China tourism research.

As a leading international academic association, IACTS is dedicated to recognising the growing importance of China tourism research and amplifying the scholarly contributions of China-based tourism scholars to the global academic community. The association strives to foster global academic collaboration, support theoretical innovation, and connect Chinese and international scholars.

This year's conference successfully brought together 34 tourism scholars from around the globe, participating both in person and virtually. The conference programme featured two expert-led panel discussions exploring critical AI-era themes,

namely Tourism Research in the AI Era and Tourism Education in the AI Era. These lively sessions generated rich dialogue on the opportunities and key challenges of AI development and utilisation in tourism research and education.

In parallel, 23 dynamic academic presentations showcased diverse perspectives on fundamental tourism themes, ranging from social media analytics and AI technology to innovative strategies for tourism demand forecasting, restorative destinations and tourist wellbeing, and the distinctive characteristics of China tourism research.

The 2025 IACTS Conference not only facilitated meaningful academic exchange but also laid the groundwork for future collaboration among China-based tourism scholars, driving pioneering knowledge sharing and innovation in tourism research.

As a global research powerhouse, SHTM is committed to bringing together experts from different fields and providing a platform for insightful exchange amongst academics, industry practitioners and tourism policy-makers.



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
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SCHOOL OF HOTEL AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Fostering Next-Generation Leaders for Social Innovation Through Cross-Cultural Experiences

Panorama JTB Tours Indonesia, part of the JTB Group, has launched "Indonesia for the World," a transformative program dedicated to advancing international social development. Developed in collaboration with Indonesia Research Institute, Inc. and Universitas Respati Indonesia (URINDO) as the academic host, this initiative is designed to nurture the next generation of social change leaders through meaningful cross-cultural experiences.

The program transforms participants from "travelers" into "changemakers" by addressing critical issues, including child stunting and food security. Target participants include high school students, university students, and professionals aspiring to become global leaders. Through field-based learning, participants develop design skills, practical communication abilities in English and Indonesian, and entrepreneurial mindsets for creating sustainable solutions.

Two specialized tracks offer intensive, hands-on experiences: "Urban Farming" focuses on food security and community empowerment through urban agriculture, while "Guardians of Hope" addresses the prevention of stunting and the protection of children's well-being.

Each track features a six-day on-site program, supplemented by pre-orientation and follow-up activities, culminating in the development of social business models and proposals for social intervention.

The program's comprehensive three-phase structure includes online orientation, on-site visits with workshops and collaborative discussions, and post-program mentoring with ongoing dialogue and network building. Panorama JTB provides full support, including program promotion, content customization, travel arrangements, and recommendations for post-program continuity. The initiative also contributes to SDGs-focused education and corporate social responsibility.

Looking ahead, Panorama JTB is committed to strengthening partnerships with educational institutions, businesses, and local governments, as well as expanding practical learning opportunities for young people. With a vision of bridging Japan and Indonesia for sustainable growth, Panorama JTB will continue to enhance program content and collaboration in the future.

Focal point for inquiries regarding this initiative

- Nana INOUE (Ms.), Branding, Marketing and Communication Team, JTB Corp.
- E-mail: jtb0074_all@jtb.com



Panorama JTB

AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

Diriyah launches Saudi Arabia's first Aman Residences, partners with THC on air mobility

Diriyah Company has launched Aman Residences, Amansamar in Wadi Safar, marking the arrival of Saudi Arabia's first Aman-branded homes. The development introduces a limited collection of ultra-luxury villas and private estates, each offering five or six bedrooms on plots starting from 9,000 sqm.

The residences, designed by Jean-Michel Gathy of Denniston Architects, form part of the wider Amansamar destination, which also includes an 80-key Aman hotel. Inspired by Aman's philosophy of peace and samar – the Arabic tradition of storytelling at dusk – the project integrates minimalist architecture with the cultural and natural heritage of Wadi Safar.

Residents will enjoy exceptional privacy and expansive living, with access to world-class amenities such as a Greg Norman designed championship golf course, the Royal Diriyah Equestrian and Polo Club, an Aman Spa with hammam and banya, a Racquet Club, curated dining, swimming pools, and exclusive membership of the global Aman Club.

Jerry Inzerillo, Group CEO of Diriyah Company, described the launch as a “significant milestone in our ongoing development of the Wadi Safar master plan”, highlighting the value of partnering with Aman Group. Vlad Doronin, Chairman and CEO of Aman Group, called Amansamar “a defining moment for Aman in the Kingdom” that reflected the brand's “deep” respect for Saudi Arabia's culture, traditions, and landscapes.

Alongside this launch, Diriyah Company signed a Memorandum of Understanding with The Helicopter Company (THC) to explore advanced urban air mobility. The partnership supports Saudi Vision 2030 and will evaluate how innovative aviation solutions can reduce congestion, improve connectivity, and deliver a distinctive visitor experience.

A joint working group will oversee planning, operations, and regulatory alignment with a strong focus on sustainability. If implemented, the initiative would add a new dimension to mobility in Diriyah, reinforcing its status as a premier cultural and tourism destination and supporting its ambition to attract 50 million visitors annually by 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*