



UN Tourism

ON THE GROUND

Fostering Tourism for Development

Issue 13 - September 2025

50 Initiatives benefiting 39 countries

Africa

- Angola
- Benin
- Botswana
- Cabo Verde
- Equatorial Guinea
- Morocco
- Republic of Congo
- Seychelles
- Tanzania
- Zimbabwe

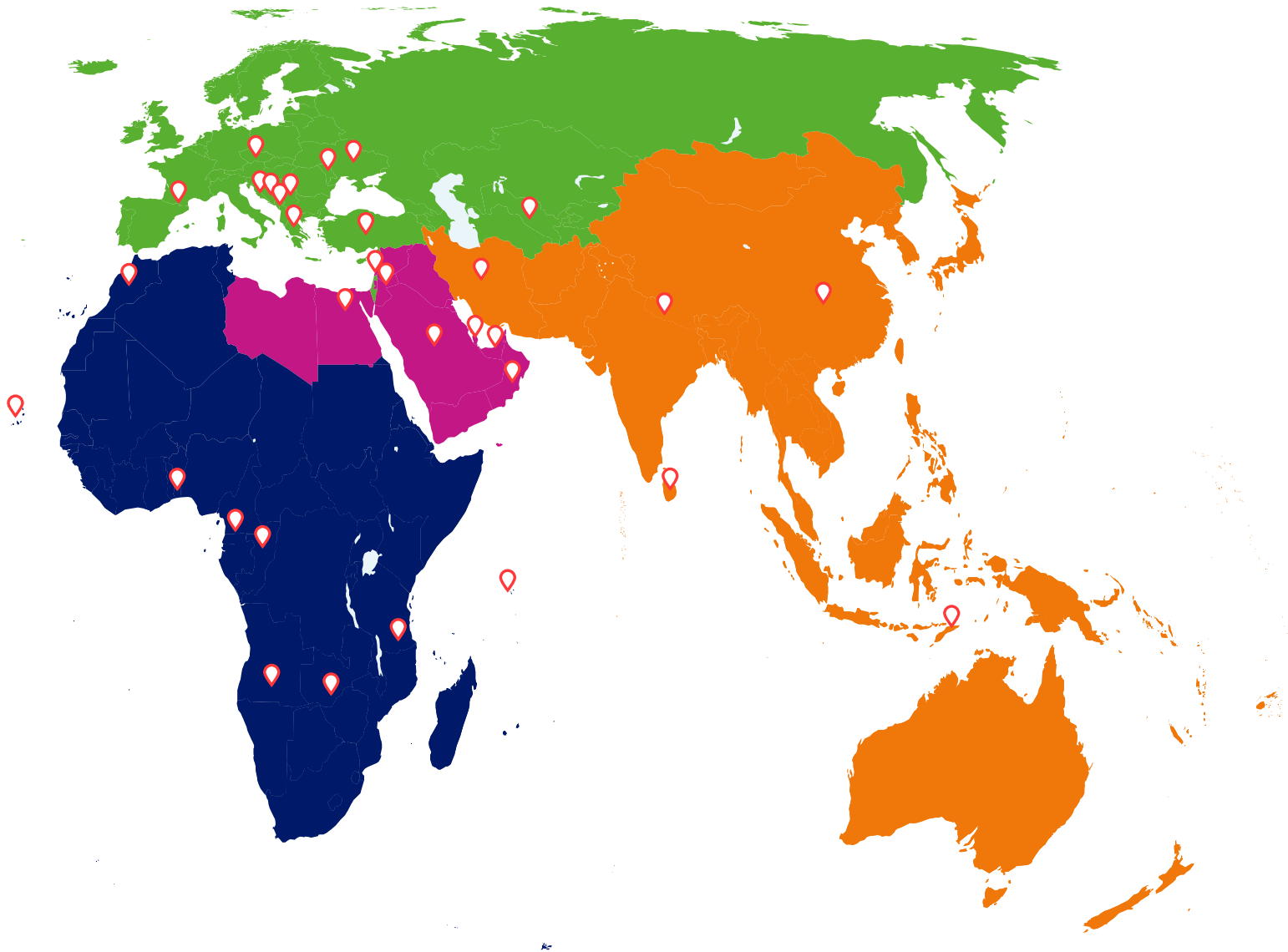
Americas

- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Paraguay

Asia and the Pacific

- China
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Nepal
- Sri Lanka
- Timor-Leste

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Europe

- Andorra
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Greece
- Montenegro
- Republic of Moldova
- Republic of Uzbekistan
- Serbia
- Türkiye
- Ukraine

Middle East

- Egypt
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates

Message from the Director

Dear colleagues and partners,

Since our December 2024 edition, the International Development and Cooperation Department has intensified its on-the-ground support to Member States, translating our shared vision of sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism into measurable results.

Across all five regions, we delivered customised interventions fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda:

Europe – Three high-impact virtual workshops on Tourism Crisis Preparedness, Response and Recovery equipped more than 150 professionals with practical tools to navigate mounting climate and geopolitical risks. Building on this momentum, we launched the Safe Destinations Challenge, an open innovation call that is already surfacing fresh ideas for risk management. In Andorra, our experts are guiding a participatory Framework Tourism Law that reflects international best practice while respecting local priorities. Meanwhile, a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding with Moldova State University cements the legacy of our youth and women empowerment pilot project and expands capacity building opportunities across the Republic of Moldova.

Asia and the Pacific – We are deepening strategic links with China by promoting the Silk Road heritage of Gansu and Shandong, while partnering with Fujian to position the province as a world-renowned destination. A milestone MoU with Shandong University opens pathways for joint research and talent development. In Sri Lanka, we were asked to define best practices for visitor management and design a visitor experience model to improve tourist satisfaction and help site preservation.



Middle East – The third Qatar Tourism Awards cycle is under way, benchmarking excellence and sparking peer learning across the region. Our upcoming project in Oman will help revise and update the country’s Hotel Classification Scheme. We are working closer than ever with our Middle East Regional Office to sharpen IDC’s responsiveness to Member State priorities and unlock new collaboration opportunities.

Americas – Two pioneering projects in Guatemala are simultaneously improving national air connectivity and updating its Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, creating a template for replicable solutions elsewhere in the region. Pipeline initiatives in Colombia, Ecuador and Honduras promise to generate long-term competitiveness and sustainability.

Africa – We are increasing our footprint and advancing our technical cooperation dialogue with Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea and Seychelles, with a focus on tourism statistics, quality standards and strategic promotion. Each programme responds to local aspirations while aligning with continental tourism priorities.

Looking ahead, we will strengthen and diversify our partnerships, amplify proven solutions, pursue new avenues of impact in every region, and draw on global lessons—while weaving in regenerative principles. We aim to foster effective tourism ecosystems that power inclusive economic growth for our Member States, to generate meaningful jobs for the women and youth.

Thank you for your continued trust and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Jaime I. Mayaki

Director, International Development and Cooperation
UN Tourism

EUROPE

Andorra

Developing a Participatory Framework Tourism Law for Andorra

UN Tourism is collaborating with Andorra's Ministry of Tourism and Commerce to create a Framework Tourism Law that addresses the sector's priorities and integrates international best practices. This initiative aims to deliver a legal framework tailored to Andorra's unique context, promoting sustainable benefits for both residents and visitors.

UN Tourism was on the ground from 17 – 21 February 2025 and conducted consultations with more than 70 public and private sector stakeholders. These discussions provided in-depth insights into the main challenges and opportunities facing Andorra's tourism industry, forming the basis for a legal framework that will regulate tourism activities while fostering sustainable, resilient, and competitive growth.

A draft of the Framework Tourism Law will be developed and presented to the government and key stakeholders for feedback. After this consultation phase, the Ministry of Tourism and Commerce will begin the legislative process, with ongoing technical support and guidance from UN Tourism to ensure effective implementation.

This participatory approach ensures that the new law will reflect both global standards and local needs, positioning Andorra as a model for sustainable and competitive tourism governance.

Related links:

[Andorra tindrà una ley marco de turismo consensuada con el sector durante este año](#)

[Torres es marca el repte de tenir en vigor la nova llei de turisme a finals de la tardor](#)

[L'elaboració de la nova Llei de turisme avança amb el suport tècnic de l'ONU](#)



Andorra Framework Tourism Law Team

Europe

IDC Director Presentation and Interactive Discussion with Focal Points of Europe

The Director of UN Tourism International Development and Cooperation Department, Mr. Jaime I. Mayaki, delivered a presentation to the Focal Points of the Europe region in UN Tourism and engaged with them in an interactive Q&A session on possible avenues for cooperation in the future.

The presentation and online meeting took place due to rising interest of the Europe Member States in the activities of the IDC Department, especially providing technical assistance to projects on the ground. The Regional Department for Europe serves the UN Tourism Member States in the region to achieve the highest standards of performance in Tourism Policy and Tourism Governance by establishing adequate contents in the Programme of Work. The Focal Points are the representatives from each country's respective Ministries of Tourism.

Mr. Mayaki highlighted on-going projects in the Europe region, as well as future projects which will be launched. One area that was showcased under the global initiative of UN Tourism is the Action Framework for Tourism Crisis Preparedness, Response, and Recovery in Europe. Europe's tourism sector is becoming increasingly exposed to security threats as well as natural hazards, which can disrupt economies, impact traveller safety, and affect destination reputation.

In close collaboration with Czechia, this strategic initiative entitled "Safety of Destinations" (SAFE-D) aims to support Member States in strengthening their tourism crisis management capabilities through knowledge-sharing, regional cooperation, and policy alignment, offering a dedicated regional

framework that addresses these challenges to enhance the resilience of tourism destinations.

In March–May 2025, three online workshops—covering the before, during, and after of crisis management—were delivered by an expert, targeting a mixed audience of representatives from Ministries of Tourism, National Tourism Organisations, regional and local councils from the Europe Region.

The workshops provided practical case studies, theoretical grounding and interactive learning between participants. There was overall a high satisfaction rate with the content provided and moderation of the workshops. There is now the opportunity to expand this approach and capacity-building to other regions, such as the Americas and Middle East.

Within the SAFE-D initiative, UN Tourism launched a Safety of Destinations innovation challenge in June open to start-ups or SMEs (more info in the link below). The deadline for applications is 31 October 2025.

Related Links:

[Action framework for tourism crisis preparedness, response, and recovery in Europe](#)

[UN Tourism Safe Destinations Challenge](#)

Republic of Moldova

Success Story: Women's Empowerment Project in the Republic of Moldova

The “Empowering Young Women: Sustainable Livelihoods through Tourism in the Republic of Moldova” project concluded successfully in June 2024. Key activities included a rapid assessment of gender equality in tourism, a Training of Trainers course for five female trainers, and 11 tourism skills workshops for 256 female entrepreneurs, covering topics like food safety, financial management, and digital marketing. Additionally, 47 tourism stakeholders participated in four online courses on tourism and gender equality.

In October 2024, UN Tourism presented these achievements at the “International Conference on Modern Paradigms in Development of National and World Economy”, organised by Moldova State University, the project’s implementing partner.

The event drew 120 participants from 17 countries, including representatives from educational institutions and tourism associations. This platform highlighted the Republic of Moldova’s progress in empowering women through tourism, reinforcing the country’s leadership in sustainable tourism and gender equality.

While in Chisinau and building on the project’s success, UN Tourism held strategic discussions with the Ministry of Culture, UN agencies, USAID Moldova, and Chemonics International. Two main areas for future collaboration were identified: improving tourism crisis management with UNDRR to better respond to natural disasters, and engaging the Republic of Moldova’s diaspora in sustainable tourism initiatives with IOM, including tailored training and support for migrants and returnees.

The project marks a significant milestone in the Republic of Moldova’s efforts toward sustainable development and gender equality. By equipping young women with essential skills and fostering new partnerships, it has created a strong foundation for future growth. UN Tourism remains committed to working with the Ministry of Culture and other partners to expand sustainable tourism and women’s empowerment initiatives in the Republic of Moldova.



Participants of the skill training workshops

Republic of Uzbekistan

Inauguration of UN Tourism's Thematic Office in Samarkand

A UN Tourism delegation, headed by Secretary-General, Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, visited Uzbekistan at the beginning of July to discuss the next steps to establish the UN Tourism Thematic Office on 'Tourism on the Silk Road'.

Both parties agreed that the establishment of the office will significantly contribute to the advancement of tourism in countries situated along the historical Silk Road and beyond, thereby facilitating the emergence of novel tourist routes and innovative products, whilst also raising tourism standards and fomenting investment in this historic region.

The parties are currently cooperating on legal frameworks that will finalize the process that commenced in October 2023 at the 25th Session of the UN Tourism General Assembly in Samarkand. Here, Member States welcomed the proposal of the Republic of Uzbekistan to establish a Thematic Office on "Tourism on the Silk Road" in Samarkand in accordance with the legal and operational framework on the selection and establishment of UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices adopted by the General Assembly.

Undoubtedly, the establishment of such a Thematic Office offers great opportunities for increased cooperation along the historic routes. Whilst commercial interest in the region has grown considerably over recent years, challenges such as limited cross-border promotional efforts and transnational development projects limit the potential of the Silk Road as a travel concept.

The Thematic Office, with a mandate to build synergies between countries interested in strengthening their natural and cultural Silk Road heritage, will, under the overall guidance of UN Tourism's International Development and Cooperation (IDC) Department, work to address these challenges through a programme of work open to all interested Member States and Affiliate Members.

With Silk Road Member State support, UN Tourism and the Government of Uzbekistan will position the Thematic Office as a relevant actor within the sphere of tourism capable of working towards development priorities that are aligned with local, regional and global needs.

Related links:

[Establishment of the UNWTO Thematic Office for Tourism on the Silk Road in Uzbekistan](#)

[Executive Council Endorses UNWTO Plan of Work in Samarkand](#)

[General Assembly Concludes With Clear Vision for UNWTO and Tourism](#)

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

China

UN Tourism Highlights the Multiple Benefits of Local Tourism Development at the WTA Xianghu Dialogue 2024

UN Tourism presented its “Developing Local Communities through a Sustainable Tourism Development Roadmap”, a publication developed for the World Tourism Alliance (WTA), at a conference held in Sanya, China, on 30 October 2024.

As co-organizer of the WTA Xianghu Dialogue 2024, UN Tourism led a session titled “A Future of Green and Sharing: New Development of Sustainable Tourism”. The keynote speech by Jaime I. Mayaki, Director of International Development and Cooperation, outlined UN Tourism’s sustainability initiatives and emphasized the need for gradual, inclusive development and high-quality, locally owned tourism products.

A panel discussion with experts from academia, industry, and organizations such as Airbnb China and the World Travel & Tourism Council explored how community-based tourism (CBT) promotes inclusive economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability. The panel agreed that CBT empowers local communities and ensures tourism aligns with their values and needs.

The session’s highlight was the launch of “*Developing Local Communities through a Sustainable Tourism Development Roadmap*”. This publication offers practical guidance and global case studies on sustainable, competitive tourism. It underscores that tourism development must be qualitative, community-focused, and aligned with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Related Links:

<https://www.wta-web.org/eng/xianghu-dialogue/wta-xianghuduihua-2024>



Panel discussion within the WTA Xianghu Dialogue

China

International Tourism Marketing Strategy for Gansu Province, China

Over the past year, UN Tourism has partnered with the World Bank and Gansu's Department of Culture and Tourism on the Gansu Revitalization and Innovation Project. The initiative focuses on three priorities: developing a Tourism Human Capital Strategy, creating an International Tourism Marketing Strategy, and delivering training for local tourism stakeholders.

After a successful seminar delivered on the Tourism Human Capital Strategy in October 2024, a follow-up seminar held in Lanzhou brought together over 50 participants to present and discuss the new International Tourism Marketing Strategy. The strategy emphasizes Gansu's Silk Road heritage with the proposed slogan, "Gansu, where the Silk Road breathes," and aims to attract visitors from East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe through digital marketing, familiarisation tours, and participation in travel fairs.

Key actions identified include building an international tourism website, increasing social media promotion,

inviting influencers, and collaborating with specialized tour operators. Based on feedback from the seminar, UN Tourism will prepare a concise version of the marketing strategy for the upcoming Silk Road International Cultural Expo in Dunhuang and will continue to support Gansu with online training, focusing on digital marketing and tourism management.

Looking ahead, further technical support is being considered, including developing the new website and helping Gansu participate in international travel fairs to implement the strategy's recommendations.

Related links:

[Launch of the Gansu Revitalization and Innovation Project](#)

[International Tourism Marketing Strategy for Gansu Province, China](#)



Buddha statue at Bingling Cave Temple, UNESCO World Heritage Site

© Laomacz | Dreamstime.com

China

Vision and Action Plan to Build Fujian into a World-Renowned Tourist Destination

UN Tourism is partnering with the Department of Culture and Tourism of Fujian Province and Fujian Normal University to create a Vision and Action Plan to establish Fujian as a world-class tourist destination.

In March 2025, a team led by the Deputy Director of UN Tourism's International Development and Cooperation Department visited Fujian to assess the province's tourism strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and to plan the project's implementation.

During a second visit, the Director of International Development and Cooperation presented the project and initial findings at the Fujian International Tourism Festival in Nanping (8–10 April 2025). Over 100 participants attended, including key tourism officials and stakeholders.

Tourism is a priority for Fujian's economic growth, thanks to its natural beauty, rich history, and vibrant culture. The new Vision and Action Plan, developed

with UN Tourism's support, will guide tourism planning in areas such as product development, marketing, and workforce quality.

The initial project meeting brought together representatives from all partners to clarify objectives and organize the first two-week field mission. The expert team visited various attractions and met with local tourism stakeholders, including government and private sector representatives.

The next expert mission is planned for July, with a third visit in the fall. The final Vision and Action Plan will be submitted to Fujian authorities by year-end and presented to stakeholders at a seminar in early 2026.

Related Links:

[UN Tourism Secretary-General Concludes Landmark Visit to China, Strengthening Global Tourism Cooperation](#)



IDC Director's presentation in Fujian

China

UN Tourism and Shandong University Establish a Key Partnership for the Benefit of Sustainable Tourism Development Worldwide

UN Tourism recently travelled to Weihai, Shandong Province, China, to celebrate the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Shandong University, one of China's top institutions recognized under the "Double First-Class Initiative" by the central government.

During the meeting between UN Tourism's International Development and Cooperation Department and Shandong University's leadership, led by Prof. Qiu Daobin, Secretary of the Party Working Committee at Weihai Campus, both parties agreed to collaborate on shared priorities. These include promoting quality education and human capital development in tourism, exchanging technical expertise, jointly developing cooperation projects, and working together on innovation, digital transformation, and youth empowerment.

To bring the partnership to life, UN Tourism also delivered a masterclass on sustainable tourism development to students from tourism, business, international studies, Northeast Asia studies, and translation faculties. The session sparked an

engaging discussion on international perspectives in sustainable tourism.

Alongside representatives from Shandong University and Weihai Municipality, UN Tourism officials toured Weihai, a scenic, eco-friendly city located on the eastern tip of the Shandong Peninsula, bordered by the Yellow Sea and facing the Korean Peninsula. Weihai serves as a strategic coastal link between Beijing/Tianjin and the Korean Peninsula.

Looking ahead, UN Tourism and Shandong University will collaborate on technical projects focused on enhancing tourism research, particularly along the Silk Road, and strengthening the skills of tourism officials from Member States to better attract Chinese visitors to their destinations.

Related links:

[UN Tourism deepens cultural cooperation with Shandong](#)

[联合国世界旅游组织代表团访问山东大学](#)



Signing of a MoU between UN Tourism and Shandong University

China

UN Tourism Supports the Exchange of Knowledge on Intangible Cultural Heritage to the International Alliance of Silk Road Cities

UN Tourism was on the ground in Chengdu to participate in the Silk Road Dialogue on intangible cultural heritage, a forum organised by the International Alliance of Silk Road Cities (ITASRC).

Since 2023, the International Alliance of Silk Road Cities organizes an annual forum on best practices in tourism development for ITASRC Member Cities. This year, the 9th edition of the International Festival on Intangible Cultural Heritage, under the title “Silk Road Dialogue: Chengdu 2025”, took place in Chengdu, China. UN Tourism was invited to take part in the events to share our knowledge on the topic and chaired a panel discussion on how exploring innovative approaches in ICH can empower tourism development.

The beautiful opening ceremony of the festival included a parade of dance, costume and musical shows representing 15 countries which was a visual feast and a reconfirmation that intangible cultural heritage forms the very soul of communities and destinations around the world.

Over 100 delegates from 18 countries participated in the Silk Road Dialogue and gained valuable insights on intangible cultural heritage preservation and tourism development and how preserving local heritage can deepen mutual learning and understanding. The panel led by UN Tourism discussed innovative approaches for intangible cultural heritage to empower tourism development. This includes leveraging new technologies, encouraging cultural creativity, engaging youth and communities in creative processes. The aim is to foster collaborations to ensure heritage and traditions remain relevant and vibrant for visitors and future generations alike.

UN Tourism’s participation is a manifestation of the strong partnership forged with ITASRC over the years. Looking ahead, both organizations hope to expand collaboration to capacity-building projects, research and publication, and participation in other international events related to the Silk Road.

Related links:

www.cice.org.cn



Panel discussion within the Silk Road Dialogue

China

International Tourism Destination Plan for Jinan City and Marketing Strategy for the Expatriate Market

With support from the Shandong Culture and Tourism Commission, UN Tourism and the Jinan Culture and Tourism Bureau have developed two key initiatives to boost Jinan's profile as an international tourism destination. The International Tourism Destination Plan, completed in early 2024, and a follow-up Marketing Strategy for Expatriates, finalized in mid-2025, aim to leverage Jinan's location between Beijing and Shanghai and its bullet train connections to attract foreign residents living in China.

The Destination Plan sets an ambitious goal for Jinan to become, by 2034, a leading destination celebrated for its welcoming atmosphere, rich heritage, vibrant culture, and role as a hub for innovation and sustainability. Catering to both leisure and business travellers, the plan highlights Jinan's unique cultural assets and natural springs.

The Marketing Strategy focuses on expatriates living in Beijing and Shanghai, a group that frequently travels within China but rarely visits Jinan. Recommended actions include promoting Jinan on English-language platforms like SmartShanghai and the Beijinger, using international social media and targeted WeChat channels, inviting English-

speaking influencers, and hosting events appealing to expats. Partnerships with international schools, universities, and tour operators will help develop tailored packages. The strategy also positions Jinan as an attractive destination for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) and weekend getaways from nearby major cities.

The plans were presented at a June 2025 seminar attended by 80 tourism professionals from Jinan's public and private sectors. Participants expressed strong enthusiasm, highlighting opportunities to leverage Jinan's authenticity, cultural heritage, and natural springs in attracting more international visitors. This initiative builds on nearly a decade of collaboration between UN Tourism and the Shandong Culture and Tourism Commission, which began with the Shandong Tourism Master Plan 2016–2025 and included marketing strategies for key source markets and technical support across the province.

Jinan now has a focused, actionable roadmap to increase expatriate visitation and share its rich heritage with the world, positioning itself for greater international recognition in the coming years.



Chao Ran Tower, Jinan

Sri Lanka

UN Tourism Supports Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority in a Study to Enhance the Overall Visitor Experience

UN Tourism was on the ground in Sri Lanka to participate in research activities of the project “Development of Visitor Experience Model and Best Practices for Visitor Management at Selected Tourism Sites in Sri Lanka”. Sri Lanka being a country endowed with rich tourism assets, improving the visitor experience while effectively managing the visitors is vital to develop the industry and enhance the competitiveness of the country. Developing the right tourism products to match visitor experience with expectations not only increases the number of arrivals and repeat visitations but creates ripple effects such as generating new employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and economic effects which improves the residents’ quality of life. The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority has requested UN Tourism’s support in defining best practices for visitor management and designing a visitor experience model to improve tourist satisfaction and help site preservation.

As part of the research activities, comprehensive site inspections were carried out throughout the month of June at key attractions: Temple of the Tooth, Sigiriya Rock, the Polonnaruwa Ancient City Complex, Hurulu Ecopark, Galle Fort, Yala National Park, and others. During these visits, consultations with site managers, tourists, and other key stakeholders were held to address issues related to the management of visitor flows and the overall visitor experience.

The final workshop of the project is to take place at the end of September 2025. UN Tourism will present on visitor management and a proposed visitor experience model that can be applied for the selected sites that can be applied to the selected sites and presented to key stakeholder groups. Ultimately, formulating and disseminating best practices for visitor management, including the integration of digital solutions and stakeholder collaboration, is vital to ensuring the sustainable development and long-term resilience of Sri Lanka’s diverse tourism sites and destinations.



Sigiriya Rock in Sri Lanka, UNESCO World Heritage Site

MIDDLE EAST

Qatar

Third Edition of Qatar Tourism Awards Unveiled, Reinforcing Global Standards and Local Impact

The Qatar Tourism Awards, a collaboration between Qatar Tourism and UN Tourism, recognize and celebrate excellence in the tourism industry. The initiative, in its third edition, aims to honour outstanding contributions across various categories that shape the visitor experience. It emphasizes sustainability and responsible tourism practices, recognizing initiatives that prioritize conservation, community engagement, and cultural preservation.

During the press conference, Mr. Omar Al Jaber, Chief of Tourism Development at Qatar Tourism, reaffirmed the significance of the partnership and emphasized the updates introduced this year, including a refined evaluation framework and the addition of new individual awards. Mr. Jaime Mayaki, Director of International Development and Cooperation at UN Tourism highlighted that “UN Tourism is proud to stand alongside Qatar in this initiative. Our partnership is built on trust, shared values, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.”

This year’s edition features 37 categories, including the new “Leading Chief Concierge” and “Hotelier of the Year” distinctions, with winners joining the Qatar Tourism Awards Alumni Network launched last year during the second edition.

Tourism service providers in Qatar are invited to showcase their impact and help shape the future of the industry through their applications for this exceptional journey towards excellence.

Related links:

[Qatar Tourism Awards](#)

[Qatar Tourism Awards 2025](#)

[3rd Qatar Tourism Awards launched](#)

[Qatar Tourism Announces Commencement of Third Edition of Qatar Tourism Awards 2025](#)



Third Qatar Tourism Awards Ceremony

AMERICAS

Guatemala

Evaluating Guatemala's Sustainable Tourism Master Plan 2015–2025

UN Tourism, in collaboration with the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT), conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan 2015–2025, finalized in December 2024. This initiative aimed to assess the Plan's achievements and challenges, establishing a foundation for its future update and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Throughout 2024, the evaluation team carried out a detailed review of both completed and ongoing tourism projects. The process analyzed the Plan's sociocultural, environmental, and economic impacts, while identifying key opportunities and persistent challenges across the sector. The evaluation produced a set of actionable recommendations that

will shape the design of the upcoming Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for the period 2026–2036.

This technical evaluation represents a critical step in strengthening Guatemala's commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism development, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the country's evolving priorities.

Related links:

www.prensalibre.com



Partnership between INGUAT and UN Tourism

Guatemala

Updating the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan and Improving Air Connectivity in Guatemala

Following the successful evaluation of Guatemala's Tourism Master Plan 2015–2025, UN Tourism and the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT) are once again joining forces to advance the country's tourism sector through two new strategic projects.

The first initiative focuses on updating Guatemala's Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for the period 2026–2036. This new plan will be developed through a coordinated and participatory process, revisiting the country's tourism vision and outlining a clear, short-term implementation strategy. It will address emerging global trends and challenges, including experiential tourism, digital transformation, climate change, overtourism, energy transition, and artificial intelligence. To ensure that the recommendations are put into practice effectively, a series of targeted trainings and workshops will be organised to strengthen the capacity of key tourism stakeholders, such as unions, companies, institutions, and public officials.

The second project aims to improve Guatemala's air connectivity, a crucial factor for both tourism and economic development. In collaboration with INGUAT, UN Tourism will work to demonstrate Guatemala's market potential to airlines, with the goal of increasing international flights and tourist arrivals. The project will produce an Air Connectivity Report focused on positioning Guatemala as a strategic hub, facilitating the establishment of new routes from key markets, increasing capacity on existing routes, and encouraging greater airline competition to offer more competitive fares and stimulate air traffic.

To formalize and consolidate the implementation of these important initiatives, Secretary-General of UN Tourism, Zurab Pololikashvili, welcomed INGUAT

Director General Harris Whitbeck to UN Tourism Headquarters on 19 February. During the visit, both parties signed agreements that will help drive these projects forward, promising significant benefits for Guatemala and the wider region of the Americas.

Advancing the Participatory Design of Guatemala's Sustainable Tourism Master Plan 2026–2036

As part of the on-the-ground activities of the project to update Guatemala's Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, conducted in July 2025, significant progress was achieved through the presentation of the multidimensional situational diagnosis and the continuation of participatory workshops across the country.

The mission took place in various departments across Guatemala, where a wide range of stakeholders actively collaborated, contributing valuable insights and proposals for the updated Plan. The process has been defined by a strong commitment to inclusion and co-creation, engaging diverse actors from the national tourism ecosystem — including ancestral authorities, local communities, entrepreneurs, private sector representatives, academia, and government institutions.

This collaborative approach reaffirms Guatemala's commitment to shaping a tourism future that is sustainable, participatory, and deeply rooted in local identity.

Related links:

www.perspectiva.gt, www.expreso.info,
www.expreso.info, <https://inguat.gob.gt/es/>,
www.prensalibre.com

Dominican Republic

Co-creating a Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Policy

UN Tourism is partnering with the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic to develop a Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Policy that reflects the country's priorities while aligning with international best practices. During their second mission, the team engaged a wide range of public and private stakeholders, establishing a solid foundation for a long-term vision of sustainable tourism in the country.

This initiative aims to create a comprehensive strategy and policy that address national goals, meet global standards, and foster an enabling environment for effective implementation. Using a participatory and co-creative approach, the process seeks to promote an inclusive, resilient, and environmentally sustainable tourism model that delivers lasting benefits for both local communities and visitors.

As part of the mission, UN Tourism conducted regional and national workshops, capacity-building sessions, and helped set up an inter-institutional working group. Strategic meetings were also held with key stakeholders such as the Dominican Congress, ASONAHORES, local mayors, and tourism entrepreneurs.

Preliminary findings from a multidimensional diagnostic were presented during the mission, and valuable feedback from stakeholders is now being used to shape the first draft of the strategy and policy. This draft will be validated in the next mission phase. Further updates will be shared as this important partnership progresses toward building a more sustainable and inclusive future for tourism in the country.



Strategic meetings with FEDOMU

Zambia

Strengthening Crisis Management in Tourism

The 2nd UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit, held in Livingstone, Zambia on 8–10 April 2025, showcased UN Tourism’s progress in elevating safety standards for tourists and so boosting confidence in travel to both regions.

It featured a dedicated workshop centred on crisis management and resilience in the tourism sector, gathering policymakers, industry leaders, and experts from Africa and the Americas. The workshop underscored the critical importance of proactive risk assessment, strategic planning, and adaptive response mechanisms to protect tourism—an essential economic pillar—from disruptions caused by natural disasters, health emergencies, economic instability, and security threats. Through theoretical discussions and real-world case studies, participants explored frameworks for risk mitigation, crisis communication, and recovery strategies, emphasizing the roles of technology, governance, and cross-border collaboration in building resilient tourism ecosystems.

A highlight of the workshop was the analysis of global case studies, including experiences from Colombia’s tourism revival through security reforms, Kenya’s strategic response to health crises, Honduras’s

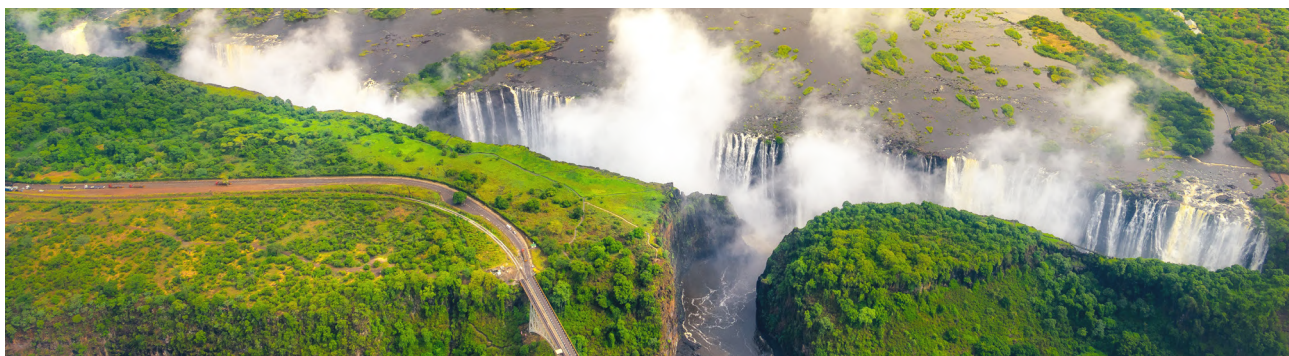
post-earthquake crisis response systems, and Mauritius’ multidimensional approach to managing a potential environmental disaster. Guests from both regions further enriched the dialogue by sharing lessons learned from recent crises, illustrating how policy innovation, stakeholder coordination, and community engagement can drive recovery.

The conference concluded with a call for sustained investment in resilience, urging destinations to prioritize robust infrastructure, transparent governance, and adaptive policies to future-proof tourism against emerging threats. By integrating theory with practical insights, the workshop reinforced that effective crisis management is foundational to sustainable tourism growth.

Related Links:

[South-South Cooperation for Tourism Development Advances at 2nd UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit](#)

[PDF - South-South Cooperation for Tourism Development Advances at 2nd UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit](#)



Victoria Falls, Zambia

International Development and Cooperation Department

The International Development and Cooperation (IDC) Department's core mandate focuses on delivering concrete, on-the-ground innovative and technical solutions, fostering cross-regional collaboration to implement practical projects, and providing direct support to Member States in advancing sustainable tourism development. Through hands-on expertise and tailored interventions, the Department will ensure impactful, real-world results.

Driven by **five strategic pillars**, the IDC Department focuses on:

Human Capital Development

Well-trained professionals are the cornerstone of successful destinations. By enhancing skills across both public and private sectors, UN Tourism ensures the tourism workforce is equipped to develop, manage, and serve sustainably and competitively in line with international standards.

UN Tourism's IDC Department provides technical assistance to Member States to conduct a Human Resources Needs Assessment and formulate a Human Resources Development Strategy. To help strengthen tourism education and training, IDC also collaborates with Member States on advisory missions to review and improve curricula of training institutes as well as on projects to develop and deliver vocational training programmes that focus on specific target groups, such as youth and women.

Strategic Planning and Promotion

Through close collaboration with Member States, UN Tourism advances tourism by shaping master plans, marketing strategies, and specialized sub-sector or thematic approaches. From eco-tourism to strengthening local economic impact, IDC aligns strategic planning to unlock each destination's unique potential.

A marketing strategy project reviews current marketing initiatives, including the value of an existing tourism brand, analyzes development trends and growth potential of main market segments, identifies opportunities for product diversification and packaging that meets the interest and demand from key markets, and proposes a mix of promotional actions, including e-marketing, to target priority market segments. Detailed marketing strategies can be developed to attract specific geographic source markets, including the domestic market or expatriates living in a country.



Data-Driven Decisions

Accurate, timely data is critical for evidence-based policymaking and effective tourism management. UN Tourism champions robust data collection and analysis to guide planning, development, and strategic interventions that foster sustainable growth.

Over the years, UN Tourism has provided technical assistance to a significant number of Member States to help strengthen their system of tourism statistics and build a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA). In some cases, this has taken the form of targeted coaching and capacity building for professionals from institutes that play a key role in compiling the TSA, including the National Tourism Administration, the National Bureau of Statistics, customs authorities, central bank and tourism business associations.

Safety of Destinations (SAFE-D) Initiative

In an increasingly complex and unpredictable world, safety and security are fundamental to sustainable tourism development. The Safety of Destinations (SAFE-D) Initiative is a global effort to strengthen crisis preparedness, response, and recovery in tourism destinations worldwide.

Through strategic partnerships, capacity-building, and policy guidance, SAFE-D supports destinations in anticipating, managing, and recovering from crises—whether natural disasters, health emergencies, geopolitical instability, or security threats.

Key Focus Areas

- Crisis Preparedness & Early Warning
- Emergency Response & Coordination
- Post-Crisis Recovery & Resilience
- Tourism Safety Standards & Regulations
- Tourism Police & Law Enforcement Cooperation
- Global Knowledge Exchange & Capacity-Building

Silk Road Synergies

Building on the region's rich heritage, IDC engages diverse stakeholders—local, national, and transnational—to develop Silk Road initiatives for tourism in a manner that respects cultural authenticity and promotes sustainable, inclusive economic development.

Upon Member State interest, UN Tourism engages with public and private stakeholders and development partners on a local, regional, national and transnational sphere to develop Silk Road heritage for tourism purposes.

The focus is placed on technical needs that will allow Member States to raise their tourism capacities from which, in a subsequent stage, transnational linkages (via tourism routes, joint activities) are to evolve organically. Ultimately, UN Tourism aims to match the ideals of those interested in discovering the historic Silk Road routes with competitive conditions, allowing for a seamless travel experience.

ON THE **GROUND**

Fostering Tourism for Development

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