

# AM News

VOL. 83 - December 2025



UN Tourism



**SPECIAL EDITION:**  
26<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism General Assembly

*Dear Affiliate Members,*

*I am pleased to introduce the latest edition of the year for 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.*

*The 26<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism General Assembly took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, marking an important milestone for our Organization and for the Affiliate Membership. In this context, several dedicated initiatives and institutional meetings were successfully held, including:*

- The 45<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of Affiliate Members, the most important statutory meeting of our network*
- The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)*
- The 62<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members*
- The Affiliate Members Corner: “Exploring Disruptive Technologies in Tourism”*

*We are also pleased to announce that the results of the elections for the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Board of Affiliate Members were officially confirmed during the Assembly. Congratulations to: NECSTouR, Saudi Tourism Authority, and Cámara Argentina de Turismo. UN Tourism looks forward to working closely with you throughout the 2026–2029 mandate to strengthen the value of the Affiliate Membership and foster public-private collaboration in tourism.*

*We continue to see a 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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, AM-PPC*



# **AGENDA OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS - EVENTS 2025**

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## **UN TOURISM STATUTORY AND HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS**

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### **UN TOURISM GENERAL ASSEMBLY & EXECUTIVE COUNCILS**

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29-30 May	<b><u>123<sup>rd</sup> Executive Council</u></b>	Segovia, Spain
7-11 Nov.	<b><u>26<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism General Assembly</u></b>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
7 Nov.	<b><u>45<sup>th</sup> Affiliate Members Plenary Session</u></b>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
8 Nov.	<b><u>124<sup>th</sup> Executive Council</u></b>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
11 Nov.	<b><u>125<sup>th</sup> Executive Council</u></b>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

### **UN TOURISM REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**

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

### **BOARD OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS**

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29 May	<b><u>61<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members</u></b>	Segovia, Spain
8 Nov.	<b><u>62<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members</u></b>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

### **COMMITTEE ON MATTERS RELATED TO AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP**

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29 May	<b><u>7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)</u></b>	Segovia, Spain
8 Nov.	<b><u>8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)</u></b>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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

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8-10 April	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> UN Tourism Africa &amp; Americas Summit</b>	Livingstone, Zambia,
23-25 April	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa</b>	Arusha, Tanzania
28-29 April	<b>Expo Japan Women Pavillion: Empowering Innovation, Investment, and Inclusion</b>	Osaka, Japan
12-13 May	<b>World Tourism Forum Prague 2025</b>	Prague, Czech Republic
24-25 June	<b>UN Tourism Global Forum on Urban Tourism: Shaping the Future of Urban Tourism</b>	Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
22-24 July	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> UN Tourism and ICAO Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air Transport in Africa</b>	Luanda, Angola
27 Sept.	<b>World Tourism Day 2025</b>	Melaka, Malaysia
6-7 Oct.	<b>9<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism Global Wine Tourism Conference</b>	Plovdiv, Bulgaria
18 Nov.	<b>International Webinar on Accessible Tourism for All: Focus on Ukraine</b>	Online
1-3 Dec.	<b>10<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism</b>	Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain
9-11 Dec.	<b><u>3rd International Seminar on Tourism Law</u> <u>“Challenges in Tourism Law”</u></b>	La Habana, Cuba

# AM-PPC NEWS

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## The Affiliate Members Plenary Session convened its 45<sup>th</sup> session

Over 100 Affiliate Members from all over the world met in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for the 45th Plenary Session.

The Plenary Session began with the institutional opening, which saw the participation and interventions of the following tourism authorities:

- His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- His Excellency Emad Naim Hijazeen, Minister of Tourism And Antiquities, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Chair of the CMAM
- Her Excellency Shaikha Al Nowais, Secretary-General Elect, UN Tourism
- His Excellency Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UN Tourism

As part of the 45<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session, UN Tourism hosted a special Affiliate Members Recognition Ceremony, celebrating outstanding contributions across key areas of collaboration. Eleven awards were presented to Affiliate Members whose work has exemplified excellence, innovation, and impact in tourism. The winners included:

- Recognition for the Promotion of the Affiliate Membership in Africa: Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO)
- Recognition for the Promotion of the Affiliate Membership in the Americas: Cámara Argentina de Turismo (CAT)
- Recognition for the Promotion of the Affiliate Membership in the Middle East: Saudi Tourism Authority
- Recognition for the Promotion of the Affiliate Membership in Asia and the Pacific: JTB Corp.
- Recognition for Sports Tourism Development: Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)
- Recognition for Assessment of New Tendencies in Tourism: Tripadvisor
- Recognition for Innovative Knowledge and Product Development: European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA)
- Recognition for Institutional Commitment and Collaboration with UN Tourism: Feria Internacional de Turismo (FITUR)
- Recognition for Successful Projects based on Public-Private Collaboration: MADCUP
- Recognition for Advancing UN Tourism POW: Fujairah Adventure Centre
- Recognition as Supportive Partner Destination: Nayarit Tourism Board

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AM-PPC NEWS

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## The 26<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism General Assembly Concludes with Excellent Outcomes for Affiliate Members

The 26<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism General Assembly (7 November – 11 November 2025) concluded recently with exceptional results for our Affiliate Members.

More than 200 participants representing over 100 affiliated entities attended the Assembly, making it the UN Tourism event with the highest representation from the Affiliate Membership this year.

During the General Assembly, priority topics for the Affiliate Members were addressed in the dedicated points of the agenda:

- The presentation of the Report of the Affiliate Members
- The presentation of the Report of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership

On 8 November, the **Committee on Matters related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)** convened its 8<sup>th</sup> in-person meeting.

This session was chaired by Jordan, represented by His Excellency Emad Naim Hijazeen, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, marking the conclusion of its successful chairmanship of the Committee. The CMAM focused on solidifying the future growth and efficacy of the Affiliate Membership network.

Following this, the **62<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members** gathered the newly elected representatives for the 2026–2029 mandate for their inaugural session.

On the same day, a new edition of the Affiliate Members Corner took place: **“Exploring Disruptive Technologies in Tourism.”**

This new edition of the Affiliate Members Corner provided a valuable platform to explore how emerging technologies are reshaping the tourism sector. The session featured presentations by the following Affiliate Members: Saudi Tourism Authority, Cruise Lines International Association, Qatar Museums, and was moderated by Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA).

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AM-PPC NEWS

## UN Tourism Welcomes 22 New Affiliate Members

UN Tourism announces the addition of 22 new entities to its growing network of Affiliate Members.

The new members combine a wide range of profiles with diverse backgrounds and types of business: 2 Destination Management Organizations, 7 for-profit companies, 6 associations and NGOs, 3 universities, and 4 others. In terms of geographical distribution, the newly admitted members come from the following regions: 3 from the Americas, 4 from Asia and the Pacific, 9 from Europe, and 6 from the Middle East, from 14 different countries.

“Welcoming these new Affiliate Members marks another step forward in expanding our unique global network that now brings together over 500 entities across the tourism ecosystem. Their inclusion reflects our commitment to fostering a geographically balanced and quality-oriented Affiliate Membership.

We’re excited to work hand in hand with our new members in driving forward the mission and vision of UN Tourism and advancing public-private collaboration in tourism,” said UN Tourism Director of the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department, Ion Vilcu.

Under the current admission procedure, the candidatures were submitted for consideration and approval of the 124<sup>th</sup> Executive Council after being previously reviewed and endorsed by the Committee on Matters related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM), during its 8<sup>th</sup> meeting that took place on 8 November. These candidatures are the result of the implementation of the expansion strategy of the Affiliate Membership, aiming at improving the quality and geographical balance of the affiliates’ network.

The admission of these new members was endorsed during the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Tourism General Assembly, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 7-11 November 2025.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AM-PPC NEWS

## The new composition of the Affiliate Members Board, for the mandate 2026-2029

The new composition of the Board of the Affiliate Members for the 2026–2029 mandate is now available>

- Chair: NECSTouR
- First Vice-Chair: Saudi Tourism Authority
- Second Vice-Chair: Cámara Argentina de Turismo

Below is the list of the 23 entities:

### Africa

- Ethiopian Tour Operators Association - ETOA
- Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors - ZATI

### Americas

- Cámara Argentina de Turismo
- Confederación Panamericana de Escuelas de Hotelería y Turismo - CONPEHT
- Expedia Group
- Fideicomiso de Promoción Turística del Estado de Nayarit
- TripAdvisor

### East Asia & the Pacific

- Chameleon Strategies
- JTB Corp.

### Europe

- Agència Catalana de Turisme
- Asociación Empresarial Hotelera de Madrid - AEHM
- CETT-Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy
- Croatian National Tourist Board
- European Network of Regions for a Competitive and Sustainable Tourism - NECSTouR
- IFEMA / FITUR Madrid
- International Congress & Convention Association - ICCA
- Madrid Destino Cultura, Turismo y Negocio S.A.
- Red Española de Turismo Accesible - Red Estable
- Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency - TGA

### Middle East

- Red Sea Global
- Saudi Tourism Authority

### South Asia

- Maldives Association of Tourism Industry - MATI
- Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran - TACI



## UPCOMING EVENTS/INITIATIVES

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UN Tourism

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UN Tourism



# UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

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## UN Tourism Confirms New Secretary-General: Shaikha Al Nowais to Become First Woman Leader in 2026

Shaikha Al Nowais has been confirmed as the new Secretary-General of UN Tourism. Meeting in Riyadh, the Organization's General Assembly formally ratified her nomination and showed their strong support.

Ms. Al Nowais will be the first woman to lead the United Nations Specialised Agency for tourism in its 50-year history. She will begin her term at the start of 2026, having gained significant experience in the private sector, most notably as Corporate Vice President at Rotana Hotels. She also chairs the Abu Dhabi Chamber's Tourism Working Group and serves on the boards of the Abu Dhabi Businesswomen Council and Les Roches Hospitality Academy.

Addressing the Assembly, the Secretary-General-elect said: "This is a triumph for all of us. It is a shared moment that reflects our collective vision for a stronger, more connected, and more compassionate world of tourism. Together, we represent the hopes of millions whose lives are touched by this sector.

Together, we carry the belief that tourism, at its best, can uplift nations and unite humanity." Looking ahead, to her mandate, she outlined five core priorities: "Responsible tourism, capacity building, technology for good, innovative financing, and smart governance — each designed to make our sector more inclusive, resilient, and human."

Ms. Al Nowais also paid tribute to the incumbent Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, commending his "vision, commitment, and role in strengthening UN Tourism's voice and global presence."

The new Secretary-General was nominated by UN Tourism's Executive Council in May. Following protocol, her nomination was put before the 160 Member States at the 26<sup>th</sup> General Assembly for their confirmation.

The appointment of the new Secretary-General for the term 2026-2029 was the highlight of the first day of the UN Tourism General Assembly. Over the course of the Assembly, delegates will participate in four plenary sessions, numerous meetings of seven specialized committees.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

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## UN Tourism's Affiliate Members Meet to Advance Public-Private Collaboration

The Affiliate Members Plenary Session, the most important statutory meeting of the Affiliate Members, convened for its 45<sup>th</sup> session in the framework of the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Tourism General Assembly.

Affiliate Members from all over the world gathered in Riyadh to debate the state of the Affiliate Membership, review the main results achieved since the previous Plenary Session in October 2023, analyze the progress of the ongoing expansion strategy aimed at a quality-oriented and geographically balanced membership, and share proposals for future projects and collaborations.

The Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department (AM-PPC) presented the Programme of Work for the period 2026–2027.

A dedicated segment of the session focused on the 1<sup>st</sup> UN Tourism Awards for Excellence in Sustainable Sports Tourism powered by FIA, a joint initiative between the Organization and the Affiliate Member Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).

Building on the session's emphasis on innovation and collaboration, UN Tourism also recognized outstanding contributions and achievements from Affiliate Members across eight categories: Promotion of the Affiliate Membership (Africa, Americas, Middle East, Asia), Sports Tourism Development, Assessment of New Tendencies in Tourism, Innovative Knowledge and Product Development, Institutional Commitment and Collaboration with UN Tourism, Successful Projects based on Public-Private Collaboration, Advancing UN Tourism Programme of Work, and Supportive Partner Destination.

The Plenary Session reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the integration of Affiliate Members into UN Tourism's agenda and governance and highlighted new opportunities for collaboration through structured mechanisms and strategic initiatives.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

## UN Tourism Sets Artificial Intelligence Agenda for Sector as General Assembly Concludes in Riyadh

UN Tourism has successfully concluded the biggest General Assembly in its 50-year history, confirming new leadership and announcing a shared vision for innovation and Artificial Intelligence.

A special Thematic Session on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence brought together public and private sector leaders.

Member States were provided with an overview of the place of AI in the Organization's agenda by Executive Director Natalia Bayona, setting the stage for a policy debate featuring interventions from more than 30 Heads of Delegation or high-level equivalent. Joining Apostolos Tzitzikostas, EU Commissioner for Sustainable Transport & Tourism, were representatives from Amadeus, Trip.com, Microsoft, and the World Economic Forum.

In Riyadh, the final of the UN Tourism Artificial Intelligence Challenge recognized the innovators leading the way in harnessing the power of new technology to transform the sector.

From the finalists, Smart Tour from Brazil was named as the overall winner.

The session concluded with the announcement of the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism, a shared roadmap to guide the sector's future. The Declaration underscores strengthening international cooperation, resilience, and the empowerment of local communities through digital innovation, AI integration, and inclusive tourism economies. Signatories commit to taking concrete steps, including incentivizing investment in digital infrastructure, addressing workforce shortages and skills gaps, and taking advantage of technological and AI-driven initiatives to support local entrepreneurship.

Member States approved the proposals to celebrate World Tourism Day 2026 around the theme of "Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence", with El Salvador as the official host country. The 2027 celebrations will be held around the theme of "Transforming Tourism through Education", with Cabo Verde to host. Finally, Member States voted to hold the 27th edition of the UN Tourism General Assembly in the Dominican Republic.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

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## Tourism and Music Partner to Harness Power of Entertainment and Communications as Drivers of Innovation, Investments, and Job Creation

UN Tourism, UMusic Hospitality & Lifestyle, and Renowned Digital Creator Khabane Lamy Broaden Center for Music Ecosystems' Campaign to Include Music Tourism,

UN Tourism has partnered with UMusic Hospitality & Lifestyle (UMHL), the entertainment-driven hospitality venture powered by Universal Music Group (UMG) and the Center for Music Ecosystems (CME) to harness the power of music tourism to drive economic growth and job creation, with a focus on high-growth-potential economies. A new Memorandum of Understanding, announced during the UN Tourism General Assembly in Riyadh, will position the creative industries as a transformative force for economic growth and community empowerment through tourism.

The partnership will also draw on the influence of some of the biggest names in global entertainment, including newly-appointed UN Tourism Ambassador Khabane Lame, one of the world's most influential digital creators with over 250 million social media followers.

Together, they will amplify the work to the global creative community, encouraging people to recognize music as a viable path to entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic mobility.

The opportunity to accelerate economic growth by unifying music and tourism is significant. Tourism accounts for one in every nine jobs worldwide and music tourism is estimated to reach a value of \$267 billion by 2030. However, it remains a niche sector.

CME will issue a series of reports in the coming year to further expand upon the potential of music tourism. This data will be put into action by UMHL, which is developing hotels and creative hubs worldwide, to support all UN Tourism stakeholders and signatories.

The new partnership broadens CME's mission, adding music tourism to CME's work with other parts of the music economy, where it is establishing the path, partnerships, and policies to accelerate the role and impact of music to eradicate poverty by driving growth, creating jobs, and improving local economic conditions.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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## Events Tourism Intelligence: Measuring Success and Legacy

For destinations, event tourism is a strategic pillar that requires careful planning to generate positive impacts for both visitors and local residents. Data intelligence has become essential to achieving this balance. Mabrian and The Data Appeal Company – Almax Group are jointly developing a dynamic, data-driven framework that uses predictive and impact analytics to forecast event performance, evaluate success, and understand the long-term legacy events leave in destinations.

In collaboration with the Global Tourism Resilience Council, Mabrian and Data Appeal presented the core principles of this framework during a private roundtable at the latest WTM London. The session brought together destination leaders from across Europe alongside senior executives from JCDecaux, ICF, This is Breeze, and Queer Destinations to discuss current priorities and challenges in event and destination management.

The framework covers the full lifecycle of event management, anticipating outcomes and legacy effects. It helps destinations and organizers identify opportunities and assess potential value when deciding whether to host or sponsor an event. It also supports effective promotion by ensuring that the purpose, impact, and legacy of events are clearly understood by all stakeholders.

Operationally, it guides data-driven planning and resource allocation and, ultimately, enables robust measurement of economic impact, visibility, reputation, sustainability, and community outcomes.

Predictive analytics and Generative AI play a central role, providing a holistic and forward-looking perspective that strengthens planning, coordination, and sustainability across the destination calendar. These tools help manage visitor flows, infrastructure pressure, economic outcomes, and local sentiment—as demonstrated in recent Mabrian analyses of world-class events such as Shakira's Summer Tour in Mexico, the UEFA Champions League forecast, Radiohead's European Tour, the MotoGP Finale in Comunitat Valenciana, and the NFL match held in Madrid. They also support long-term strategic goals such as reducing seasonality, diversifying markets, and promoting knowledge transfer.

Placing residents at the center of decision-making reinforces authenticity, fosters belonging, and aligns events with sustainable growth rather than short-term visitor spikes. Ultimately, event tourism intelligence enables destinations to maximize limited budgets, identify new opportunities, strengthen strategic positioning, and focus not only on economic or reputational impact but on the lasting legacy events create.



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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## Risk Management for Outdoor Programs

Forty-Hour Online Training for Outdoor, Adventure and Travel Professionals

Viristar's Risk Management for Outdoor Programs course offers 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.

## Course Dates

- January 7 - February 4, 2026
- February 4 - March 4, 2026
- March 4 - April 1, 2026
- April 1 - 29, 2026
- May 6 - June 3, 2026
- August 5 - September 2, 2026
- September 2 - 30, 2026
- October 7 - November 4, 2026

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## AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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### **Training Sessions for the Development and Strengthening of Wine Tourism in the Argentine Provinces**

Within the framework of the agreement between the Federal Investment Council (CFI) and the Argentine Wine Corporation (COVIAR), sustained efforts are being carried out to strengthen viticulture across the Argentine provinces, incorporating wine tourism (enoturismo) as one of the key strategic pillars of this agenda.

During 2023, the first stage focused on developing descriptive diagnostics of the current state of enoturismo, analyzing factors such as the number of wineries open to tourism, vineyard area, services offered, and other key indicators. Subsequently, and in coordination with the CFI's International Relations Department, Reverse Trade Missions and training sessions in enoturismo were implemented for the wine sector in the NOA (Northwest Argentina) and Patagonia regions. In addition, Product and Wine Region Valorization Workshops were held in Jujuy, Salta, and Tucumán, aimed at strengthening territorial identity and enhancing the tourism offer linked to wine.

As a continuation of these initiatives, in November, Training and Capacity-Building Workshops on the Development of Tourist Experiences were held in Jujuy and Tucumán, which included the identification and selection of local agri-food productions to be integrated into enoturismo experiences. In December, these activities will be replicated in Salta, consolidating a process of training and territorial collaboration coordinated with provincial governments.

These actions contribute to deepening the federal development of enoturismo, strengthening local capacities, promoting institutional coordination, and consolidating a joint strategy for the promotion of the activity. It is important to note that these workshops and training sessions are not open to the public but are carried out through coordinated efforts between the provinces and the CFI, ensuring a structured approach with direct impact on the strengthening of Argentina's wine and tourism sectors.



**CONSEJO FEDERAL  
DE INVERSIONES**



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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## TOPOSOPHY Provides Key Options and Insights for Kilkenny's Medieval Mile

TOPOSOPHY successfully concluded its collaboration with Kilkenny County Council by delivering an Orientation and Animation Report for the city's Medieval Mile, supporting sustainable and community-centric development.

### About the Project:

Kilkenny is home to some of Ireland's most important Medieval heritage, offering unique opportunities to unite locals and visitors around the development of the Medieval Mile at the city's heart. Alongside its rich heritage, Kilkenny is recognised for its creative scene, cultural calendar, and global achievements such as those of the award-winning Cartoon Saloon.

Guided by the Kilkenny Tourism Strategy and Fáilte Ireland's DEDP, TOPOSOPHY was commissioned to explore the visitor experience potential of the Medieval Mile. The project addressed key challenges, including sustainable visitor distribution, Night-Time Economy activation, and the alignment of new heritage investments like the Medieval Mile Museum.

The resulting research focused on how Kilkenny County Council could harness its creative economy and festival network to foster community-led activation along the Medieval Mile.

### Delivery Modules:

- Strategic Development Context: Comprehensive review of relevant strategic plans, public policy frameworks, and Night-Time Economy funding mechanisms.
- Benchmarking & Best Practice: Comparative analysis of Wexford's Viking Quarter, Limerick's King's Island, and Kinsale's Historic Quarter to identify lessons and differentiation opportunities.
- SWOT Analysis: Evaluation of strengths (heritage and infrastructure), weaknesses (sensitive public realm), opportunities (alignment with investment channels), and threats (heritage wear and infrastructure pressure).
- Executive Implementation Report: Definition of key "place priorities," with a practical implementation plan, potential suppliers, and indicative costs.
- Imagining Success: Four creative scenarios illustrating how Kilkenny's Medieval Mile could thrive through community, creativity, and culture.

TOPOSOPHY was delighted to deliver this project and strengthen its collaboration with Kilkenny County Council and Fáilte Ireland's Ireland's Ancient East team.

**TOPOSOPHY**  
PLACE MAKING & MARKETING AGENCY



## AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

### PolyU and WTTC Study Unveil Key Trends on the Future of Work in Travel & Tourism

The Research Centre for Digital Transformation of Tourism (RCdTT) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) in collaboration with World Travel & Tourism Council (WTCC), the Ministry of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Coraggio Group and Miles Partnership, recently released a report, titled “The Future of Work in Travel and Tourism: The key trends shaping workforce strategies”, to delve into the employment trends and challenges in the travel and tourism sector. The study highlights urgent workforce challenges and actionable strategies to secure the sector’s future.

Travel and tourism remain a global employment powerhouse, supporting 350 million jobs in 2024 and projected to create 91 million more by 2035. Yet, the sector faces mounting challenges, including talent shortages, aging populations, restrictive labour policies, and rapid technological development. By 2035, demand for workers is expected to outstrip supply by 43.1 million, leaving the global workforce 16% below required levels.

Led by Prof. Haiyan Song, RCdTT Director and SHTM Associate Dean, Prof. Richard TR QIU, SHTM Associate Professor and Prof. Yitong YU, SHTM Assistant Professor, along with Mr. Nejc Jus, Director of Research at WTTC, and co-authored with members from WTTC, the research surveyed respondents across major regions and industry sub-sectors. Findings reveal critical skill gaps in managerial, customer-facing, and operational roles, with analytical thinking, creativity, leadership, and resilience emerging as top priorities. Lifelong learning and digital readiness are essential to meet evolving demands.

The report outlines strategic recommendations, such as improving industry perception, fostering career progression, enabling flexible recruitment, aligning education with industry needs, and promoting lifelong learning etc.

For full insights and recommendations, please download the full report [HERE](#).



SCHOOL OF HOTEL AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT



### The Future of Work in Travel & Tourism

The key trends shaping workforce strategies



## AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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### **Diriyah Company launches Manazel AlHadawi, showcases Diriyah to global audiences at World Travel Market**

Diriyah Company has introduced Manazel AlHadawi, a new residential area featuring 239 premium homes inspired by traditional Najdi architecture. The development forms part of Diriyah's wider masterplans and follows contract awards valued at USD1.5 billion (SAR5.7 billion) to support infrastructure, mobility, and public services.

Designed around modern living, Manazel AlHadawi offers walkable streets, public parks, and access to cultural assets, retail, and hospitality areas across Diriyah. The homes value and respect the local identity while providing residents with privacy, comfort, and a strong sense of community.

Diriyah Company also showcased the Diriyah project to international audiences at World Travel Market London 2025, hosting an immersive exhibition at Outernet during November. Over six days, visitors were invited to explore digital environments inspired by Diriyah's landscapes and cultural districts as part of a cutting-edge experience showcasing the destination's heritage, culture, and development.

Following two years of strong success, with almost three million visitors having experienced Diriyah's activations in London, this year's exhibition spotlighted both current attractions and future opportunities for investment and tourism. Visitors experienced authentic Saudi moments, including traditional dance performances, Saudi coffee, Arabic calligraphy, and other cultural showcases, while immersive digital screens brought Diriyah's masterplans to life.

The exhibition brought together travel professionals, media, and industry partners, providing a close look at Diriyah's development within a global tourism context. The experience focused on cultural identity, community life, and the emerging hospitality offerings that are shaping the destination.

As Diriyah's masterplans continue to grow, the company remains engaged with partners from the real estate, hospitality, and leisure sectors who share its long-term vision.



## AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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### The Arouca Digital Commercial District

IPDT – Tourism Intelligence recently designed and implemented the Marketing and Communication Plan for the Arouca Digital Commercial District. The strategy aims to raise awareness, inform the public about the district's services, attract local businesses, and stimulate the local economy, while supporting its digital transformation.

IPDT developed the project through an integrated approach that included creating the visual identity, adapting the brand to multiple physical and digital formats, developing communication and promotional campaigns, and delivering awareness and training initiatives. The team also produced photographic and audiovisual content to support the Arouca Digital brand, which represents the official identity of Arouca's Digital Commercial District.

The brand is built around the claim "Closer and Yours", a phrase that reflects the project's commitment to the community. "Closer" because it brings people, stories, and opportunities together. "Yours" because it adapts to each person, their preferences, and their needs.

The Arouca Digital project acts as a dynamic showcase of the region's strengths and offers a new way to highlight and expand its potential. Through the Arouca Digital platform and app, local products and services, including accommodation, restaurants, events and employment opportunities, are presented in a single digital environment. The integrated marketplace allows users to shop, book and schedule online, improving access to local offerings and strengthening the connection between residents, visitors and businesses.

The platform also includes several advanced digital solutions and technological systems designed to modernise both the shopping experience and the use of public spaces. These include a Dynamic District Map, Smart Lockers, bike-sharing and smart-parking systems, Urban Wi-Fi and Digital Kiosks. Funded by the EU Recovery and Resilience Plan, the project is managed by the Municipality of Arouca in partnership with local organisations. IPDT's contribution reinforces its commitment to regional development and to sustainability in the tourism sector.





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.

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