

Agenda item 6

Report on the activities of the Affiliate Members71CAM/ODP
Madrid, April 2026
Original: English**1. Introduction**

This meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for Americas (CAM) provides a timely opportunity to reflect on the latest activities and strategic direction of the UN Tourism's Affiliate Membership in the region.

The report outlines the main institutional developments and thematic contributions of Affiliate Members in the Americas, providing insight into strategic objectives, implementation progress, Affiliate Membership status and trends, and upcoming opportunities.

2. Strategic objectives for the Affiliate Membership (2026–2027)

The work of the Organization in this area, carried out through its specialized structure, the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration (AM-PPC), continues to focus on **strengthening its Affiliate Membership**.

The overall objective is to enhance the value of belonging to UN Tourism as an Affiliate Member, ensuring that each member feels part of a dynamic and relevant network that offers spaces for collaboration, visibility and engagement.

In this context, AM-PPC has prioritized efforts to support Affiliate Members in fully benefiting from their membership while strengthening the capacity of the network to contribute to the Organization's agenda. This includes both more effective engagement of existing members and quality-driven expansion through the incorporation of strong new partners.

These strategic objectives aim to consolidate the Affiliate Membership as a key pillar of the Organization.

2.1. Enhancing the Value of Affiliate Membership

Consistent work is currently being done by the AM-PPC Department in order to **(a)** reach a more effective integration of the Affiliate Members in the Programme of Work, agenda of activities and main projects carried out by UN Tourism, and to **(b)** permanently improve the facilities and services offered by the Organization to AMs.

a. During the reporting period, efforts to better **integrate Affiliate Members into the technical and strategic work of UN Tourism** have gained further momentum.

This approach, based on a mutually beneficial dynamic, seeks to leverage the expertise of Affiliate Members while providing them with increased institutional visibility and opportunities for engagement. It reflects the principles established through the **Legal Reform** and the new **Expansion Strategy**, aimed at strengthening governance and ensuring that Affiliate Members from all regions —particularly the less represented ones— play a more active role in shaping the global tourism agenda.

Affiliate Members from Americas have made notable contributions across several thematic areas:

- **Astrotourism:** Launched at FITUR 2026, [A Guide for the Development of Astrotourism](#) provides practical guidance for destinations, while promoting sustainable tourism practices. The guidelines were developed in collaboration with Fundación Starlight, with contributions from several

partners from the Americas, including the Secretariat of Tourism and Environment of Argentina (Member State), the State Tourism Advisory Council of Yucatán, Mexico (Affiliate Member), PROMPERÚ, Peru (Affiliate Member), and San Cosme and Damián, Paraguay (Best Tourism Village). The launch was complemented by a dedicated episode of the [UN Tourism's "ON THE GO"](#) podcast in Spanish, further exploring the opportunities of astrotourism for destinations.

- **Sports Tourism:**

- ☞ [1st edition of the UN Tourism Awards for Excellence in Sustainable Sports Tourism, powered by FIA](#) (March 2026): This global programme recognizes outstanding initiatives that position sport as a driving force for sustainable tourism development. The initiative further positioned UN Tourism as a leading global platform for promoting sustainable sports tourism and encouraged innovation and the exchange of best practices among destinations and industry stakeholders. In the Americas, initiatives such as the Smart Sports Tourism Living Lab in Costa Rica's Blue Zone, which received a Special Recognition in the category of Innovation in Sports Tourism Development, and the WRC UENO Rally of Paraguay 2025, awarded the UN Tourism Secretary-General Exceptional Award and presented by the National Secretariat of Tourism of Paraguay, highlight the region's growing leadership in leveraging sport as a catalyst for sustainability, destination positioning, and inclusive economic development.

- ☞ UN Tourism signed a Host Agreement with Mexico for the 4th World Sports Tourism Congress, to be held in Mexico City from 7 to 9 September 2026. Convening shortly after the FIFA World Cup 2026™, the Congress will leverage the momentum and lessons of one of the world's largest sporting events to advance new models and opportunities for sports tourism development in destinations worldwide.

- ☞ Preparations are underway for the organization of Sports Tourism Day, within the 30th edition of FIT Latin America (Feria Internacional de Turismo de América Latina, Buenos Aires, 26 - 29 September 2026), in collaboration with Affiliate Members FAEVYT and the Buenos Aires Tourism Board.

- **Audiovisual tourism:** UN Tourism is supporting flagship initiatives such as the Premios PLATINO, in collaboration with Affiliate Members including EGEDA and Grupo Xcaret. This collaboration highlights the growing role of the audiovisual sector as a driver of tourism promotion, cultural exchange, and destination branding, particularly across Ibero-America, while fostering new partnerships between the tourism and creative industries.

- **Aviation and tourism:** A co-edition agreement has been signed with the Affiliate Member ICF, (United States), for a publication on connectivity strategies in emerging destinations worldwide.

- **Thermal Tourism:**

- ☞ [The Thermal Congress 2025](#), held in June in Budapest, Hungary, brought together key stakeholders—including mayors, tourism professionals, and wellness experts—to explore the role of thermal destinations in sustainable development and health tourism. The event was organized by the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA), with the participation of UN Tourism. From the Americas, Affiliate Member Tripadvisor (United States) shared global data confirming that relaxation and longevity are increasingly important motivations for travel, reflecting a growing demand for wellness-focused experiences worldwide.

- ☞ A co-edition agreement has been signed with the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) for a publication on thermal tourism, which will include contributions from Affiliate Members actively engaged in this sector, including stakeholders from the Americas.

- Industry intelligence sharing from Affiliate Members (AMConnected+): UN Tourism disseminated key travel trends from Affiliate Members from the Americas, such as the [Tripadvisor Trendcast 2026](#) and the [HBX Group](#) Travel Trends 2026 Report.

b. AM-PPC Department has also continued to **strengthen the services and facilities offered to Affiliate Members**, with a particular focus on enhancing opportunities for networking, visibility and institutional representation.

In this regard, Affiliate Members have been actively involved in UN Tourism's statutory meetings and key events (Executive Council sessions, Regional Commissions and World Tourism Day celebrations).

Additional visibility and engagement opportunities were provided through major international tourism fairs such as FITUR (Spain) and ITB Berlin (Germany), as well as regional fairs such as ABAV Expo (Brazil), notably through the UN Tourism Affiliate Members Corner—a dedicated platform for showcasing projects, exchanging ideas and strengthening public–private dialogue, such as, with strong participation from Affiliate Members from the Americas:

- **Affiliate Members Corner – Road to COP30: Inside Latin America's Private Tourism Sector (ABAV Expo 2025, Rio de Janeiro, 8–10 October 2025)**

At the ABAV Expo 2025, held from 8 to 10 October in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, UN Tourism, in collaboration with ABAV, hosted the Affiliate Members Corner “Road to COP30: Inside Latin America's Private Tourism Sector.” The session featured contributions from key Affiliate Members in the Americas, including FAEVYT (Argentina), ABAV (Brazil), and CONCANACO SERVYTUR (Mexico). Discussions focused on transparency, sustainability, and domestic tourism development, highlighting the role of private sector associations in advancing a more sustainable and competitive tourism model in the region ahead of COP30.

- **Affiliate Members Corner – Exploring Disruptive Technologies in Tourism (26th UN Tourism General Assembly, Riyadh, 7–11 November 2025)**

During the 26th UN Tourism General Assembly, held from 7 to 11 November 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Affiliate Members Corner “Exploring Disruptive Technologies in Tourism” showcased how emerging technologies are transforming the sector. The session addressed Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Virtual and Augmented Reality, Biometrics, Cybersecurity, and Big Data. Participation from Affiliate Members from the Americas, including Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), United States, highlighted the region's role in driving digital innovation and shaping the future of tourism through technology adoption and data-driven strategies.

- **Affiliate Members Corner – Cross-Sector Value in Tourism (FITUR 2026, Madrid, 23 January 2026)**

Held on 23 January 2026 during FITUR in Madrid, Spain, the Affiliate Members Corner “Cross-Sector Value in Tourism” explored the growing interconnection between tourism and other economic and social sectors. The session featured contributions from Affiliate Members, including Tripadvisor, representatives from the State of Nayarit, Mexico, and Maraey, Brazil. Discussions highlighted how cross-industry collaboration—spanning culture, music, wellness, retail, sports, hospitality, and real estate—drives destination competitiveness, resilience, and sustainable development, reinforcing tourism's role as a catalyst for integrated growth.

2.2. Quality-oriented expansion

The Americas accounted for 10.5% of entities admitted at the 123rd Executive Council and 13.6% at the 26th General Assembly. The region currently represents 100 of the 504 Affiliate Members (19.8% of total membership), including 3 of the top 10 countries (United States, Mexico and Colombia). Since June 2025, 36 applications have been received from the Americas, of which 2 have so far reached the integration stage (5.6%), one admitted at the 26th General Assembly and one at the 126th Executive Council. Since the introduction of the application fee, 10 applications have been submitted from the region, representing 31.3% of the total—the highest share among all regions—with 2 not retained. Regarding retention, 22.2% of withdrawals due to arrears in 2025 were from the Americas, compared to 5% in 2024; however, arrears largely reflect accumulated situations from previous years, and the region currently has the lowest proportion of Affiliate Members with multi-year outstanding debts.

3. Enhanced collaboration with the Board of Affiliate Members

The collaboration with the Board of Affiliate Members has continued to play a central institutional role.

The 2022-2025 mandate marked the first four-year mandate for the Board, aimed at strengthening institutional stability and aligning it with the mandate of the Secretary-General.

AM-PPC continued to support the **Board of Affiliate Members** in the organization of all their meetings and demarches and to have a permanent and smooth collaboration in all the important issues on the agenda. The 62nd Meeting of the Board (*Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, November 2025*) and the 63rd Meeting of the Board (*Madrid, Spain, January 2026*) focused, among others, on governance matters (election of the authorities of the Board), approval of the roadmap of participation of the Board 2026 statutory meetings and the development of the Programme of Work for the Affiliate Members. .

AM-PPC encouraged and supported the participation of the institutional representative of the AMs, designated by the Chair of the Board, in all UN Tourism's Statutory meetings celebrated lately (Executive Councils and Regional Commissions).

Particular emphasis has been placed on strengthening the dialogue between the Board and the **Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)**, contributing to improved alignment, transparency and governance.

4. Elections for the 2026–2029 Board of Affiliate Members

Affiliate Members have elected the members of the new Board for the 2026–2029 term. Preparations for the election took place between January and September 2025 and the elections were held between 1 and 22 October 2025 on a dedicated, secure online platform.

At the 62nd meeting of the Board, held on November 2025, its members elected NECSTouR - European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism as its Chair, Saudi Tourism Authority as its First Vice-Chair and Chamber of Tourism of Argentina as its Second Vice-Chair.

Among the other 20 Board Members, Chamber of Tourism of Argentina, Pan American Confederation of Hospitality and Tourism Schools (CONPEHT), Expedia Group, Nayarit State Tourism Promotion Trust, and TripAdvisor represent the Affiliate Members from the Americas.

The election process demonstrated the Organization's commitment to participatory governance and institutional legitimacy, as well as the increasing interest of the Affiliate Members to participate in the governance of the network, taking into consideration the consistent number of candidatures registered: 56. Also it is worth noting that 64% of eligible voting members cast their ballots, which marked an important increase in the participation, compared to the previous elections for the Board, celebrated in 2021.

5. Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration – Programme of Work 2026–2027

The Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department elaborated its **Programme of Work for the Affiliate Members 2026–2027** in full alignment with the Organization's **General Programme of Work 2026–2027**. These two strategic instruments are distinct yet complementary:

- The **General Programme of Work of the Organization**, developed in consultation with Member States, outlines the Organization's institutional priorities and global strategic direction.
- The **Programme of Work for the Affiliate Members** translates those priorities into concrete initiatives, partnerships, and knowledge products driven by Affiliate Members.

To enhance participation and alignment, UN Tourism launched an open Call for Proposals, inviting Affiliate Members to contribute initiatives supporting the Organization's priorities.

This process has strengthened engagement and enabled the development of new partnership formats, including the "Affiliate Members-Driven Services for UN Tourism" framework, designed to provide Member States with access to innovative tools, expertise and services.

6. Conclusion

The Affiliate Membership continues to play a pivotal role in advancing innovation, dialogue, and sustainable development across the global tourism sector.

In the Americas, the region with the second largest number of Affiliate Members, progress has been particularly dynamic, proving to be a valuable source of ideas and partnerships that contribute meaningfully to the global agenda. Looking ahead, the focus will remain on strengthening the network, fostering active participation in UN Tourism programmes and events and ensuring alignment with the Organization's strategic priorities.

Through continued cooperation between Member States and Affiliate Members, the region is well-positioned to further consolidate its leadership role in shaping the future of global tourism.