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Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

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I. Trends and outlooks for international tourism in the region

1. International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) grew by 5% in 2025, as most destinations worldwide posted solid results. An estimated 1.534 billion international tourists were recorded globally in 2025, 73 million more than in 2024.
2. These numbers reflect a return to pre-pandemic growth trends, closer to the 5% average increase per year between 2009 and 2019. Results were driven by strong demand, robust performance from large source markets and the ongoing recovery of destinations in Asia and the Pacific. Increased air connectivity and enhanced visa facilitation also supported international travel in 2025.
3. Europe, the world's largest destination region, recorded 810 million international tourists in 2025, a 5% increase from 2024 and 8% more than in 2019. Western Europe (+5%) and Southern Mediterranean Europe (+4%) saw robust performance. Central and Eastern Europe rebounded strongly (+9%).
4. The Americas (220 million) recorded 1% growth in 2025, with mixed results across subregions. After a strong first half of 2025, the region saw small declines in Q3 and Q4, partly due to weak results in the United States. South America (+10%) and Central America (+6%) led results by subregion. Some destinations in the Caribbean (+0.4%) were affected by Hurricane Melissa in the last quarter of the year. Arrivals in North America (-1%) declined slightly in 2025.
5. Africa (80 million) saw a 7% increase in arrivals in 2025, with particularly strong results in North Africa (+11%).
6. The Middle East recorded 4% growth in 2025, equivalent to 40% above pre-pandemic levels, the strongest results relative to 2019. The region reached the mark of 100 million international visitors in 2025.
7. Arrivals in Asia and the Pacific (325 million) grew 8% last year but are still 10% below 2019 levels as the region continued to rebound. North-East Asia led performance with 14% growth over 2024, while South Asia recovered pre-pandemic levels.
8. After solid growth in 2024, most destinations continued to enjoy strong results in 2025.
9. Among destinations with available data for the twelve months of 2025 several show double-digit growth in international arrivals, among which Paraguay (+91%), Vanuatu (+62%), Lebanon (+46%), Brazil (+37%), Israel (+37%), Palau (+28%), Guyana (+22%) and Egypt (+20%). Destinations such as South Africa (+18%), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (+17%), Japan (+16%), Republic of Korea (+16%), Bolivia (+16%), Sri Lanka (+15%), Chile (+15%) and Morocco (+14%) also enjoyed strong results.
10. The positive results in international arrivals last year are also reflected in other industry indicators. As shown in the UN Tourism Data Dashboard, both international air capacity and air passenger

traffic grew 7% in 2025 (IATA). Global occupancy in accommodation establishments reached 61% in December 2025, matching the levels of December 2024 (based on STR data).

11. According to preliminary estimates from mid-May, international tourist arrivals grew 2% in Q1 2026. In the Americas, arrivals are estimated to have increased by 2% in Q1 2026. By subregion, arrivals in Central America grew an estimated 18% in Q1 2026, while North America saw 2% increase. The Caribbean (0%) saw flat growth in arrivals, while South America (-1%) recorded a slight decline in the first quarter of 2026. (a comprehensive update will be provided on the occasion of the Commission meeting based on the May 2026 World Tourism Barometer to be released at the end of May).
12. The current crisis in the Middle East has impacted on the results of Q1. Global oil prices and particularly jet fuel prices have surged and remain highly volatile, which could lead to higher transport prices in a context of already elevated services and travel inflation and increased pressure on households.

II. Key Challenges and Opportunities Affecting the Tourism Sector in the Americas

13. The region faces difficulties and uncertainties arising from global crises and challenges (geopolitical, climate-related, and economic) as well as regional issues such as unemployment, security, and health, all of which hinder progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this regard, UN Tourism is working to enhance the contribution of tourism to addressing the key challenges currently affecting the region.
14. Climate change and its associated adverse effects pose a threat to all destinations, but particularly to the Caribbean, where the economy is closely tied to tourism, and vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events is especially high. UN Tourism and this Regional Department are working to increase tourism resilience with initiatives that we describe below.
15. The tourism sector in the Americas faces the significant challenges of advancing towards a more sustainable model that successfully balances economic growth with the conservation of its natural and cultural heritage. While the sector provides a key source of employment, investment, and development for many countries, it also exerts considerable pressure on ecosystems, local communities, and infrastructure. The region's diversity calls for tailored approaches that promote responsible planning, social inclusion, and efficient resource management. In response, UN Tourism is promoting initiatives to strengthen governance and planning, foster innovation, and a move towards a resilient and inclusive tourism sector aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.
16. As part of the ongoing efforts to foster a favourable climate for private investment, it is essential to underscore the importance of maintaining public security, fiscal and monetary stability, and political and institutional stability. These foundations not only strengthen the region's economy but also generate an environment of trust and security that is indispensable for attracting and retaining long-term investment.
17. UN Tourism remains committed to addressing one of the region's major challenges: connectivity. To this end, the Regional Department is working to enhance regional connectivity through engagement with the region's leading airlines and with organisations such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA). In addition, in collaboration with the Department of Market Intelligence, Policy and Competitiveness, it continues to publish the forward-looking demand trends report with Amadeus: Travel Insights: Focus on the Americas, now extended to all regions.
18. In view of a rapid evolving landscape, data and market intelligence systems are more critical than ever. It is essential to enhance measurement to better manage tourism through data and research. Data-driven policies support effective decision-making. UN Tourism will continue to support the improvement of data collection, measurement and analysis and promote robust tourism intelligence systems.

III. Introduction

19. The UN Tourism General Assembly approved the draft programme of work and budget 2026-2027 at its 26th session in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, around three strategic objectives and five Programmatic Priorities:
20. Strategic objectives:
 - (a) Objective 1: Leading in tourism, positioning the sector in the global agenda, through advocacy, knowledge creation, policy guidance and diversification of services.
 - (b) Objective 2: Expanding the Organization and membership. Increase resources, capacity and ownership, through strategic partnerships.
 - (c) Objective 3: Transforming the Organization for a better future. More agile and effective governance. Embracing UN values and multilateralism for realizing the 2030 Agenda.
21. Programmatic Priorities:
 - (a) Priority 1: Placing tourism in global, regional and national agendas. Building better and stronger institutions: Data, Standards, Governance, Policies and Legislation.
 - (b) Priority 2: Market intelligence, rethinking destination positioning and product development.
 - (c) Priority 3: Fostering sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience: circularity, climate action, and biodiversity. Reduce inequalities and promote culture.
 - (d) Priority 4: Enabling economic growth, boosting investment and innovation: accelerating the uptake of new business models.
 - (e) Priority 5: Investing in people: reinforcing education and training, strengthening human capital for decent work.

IV. Strategic Objectives

A.Objective 1: Leading in tourism, positioning tourism in the global agenda, through advocacy, knowledge creation, policy guidance and diversification of services

22. The Regional Department for the Americas collaborated with the Union of Capital Cities of Ibero-America (UCCI) with a virtual participation in the Tourism Sector Committee on “Tourism Trends in the Americas” (September 2025).
23. UN Tourism continues to prioritize sustainable and resilient tourism—including ecotourism—within the UN General Assembly agenda, recognizing its role in poverty reduction, environmental protection, and sustainable tourism development in regions such as Central America and the Dominican Republic. As part of these ongoing efforts, UN Tourism regularly prepares comprehensive reports on the status, progress, and challenges of sustainable tourism, drawing on inputs from Member States and other UN entities. For each report, UN Tourism provides high-level technical support during negotiations, advising Member States and facilitators—such as the Dominican Republic during the development of what would become Resolution A/RES/80/134—and ensuring UN Tourism priorities are accurately reflected. These reports and negotiations provide recurring opportunities to inform discussions and shape global tourism policy, as demonstrated by the 2025 report (25 July 2025, A/80/267) and the resolution’s adoption on 18 December 2025.
24. UNESCO and UN Tourism have signed a new MoU to strengthen the cooperation between the two specialized agencies to advance sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism worldwide. The partnership will aim, among other activities, to scale solutions that connect culture, communities and economies — with impact that is visible, sustained and shared.
25. The Association of Caribbean States - ACS and UN Tourism are working closely to design a Work Plan addressing the needs of the Caribbean region (April 2026).
26. Conference of the Parties on Climate Change:

- a. Building on tourism's historic inclusion in the COP29 Action Agenda in 2024, UN Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism of Brazil convened two dedicated [Tourism Thematic Days at UN Climate Change COP30](#) on 19–20 November 2025 in Belém, Brazil. These Tourism Thematic Days further elevated tourism's visibility within the global climate agenda and reinforced the sector's relevance to climate governance, adaptation and implementation.
 - b. The COP30 Tourism Days also reinforced the role of the [Interinstitutional Working Group on Tourism and Climate Action](#) under UN Tourism's Executive Council as pioneering mechanism to strengthen coordination and implementation across Member States.
27. In the framework of FITUR, UN Tourism participated in the 13th Ibero-American Conference of Ministers of Tourism, organised by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Government of Spain. The conference aimed to foster collaboration and create a unified, sustainable, and inclusive agenda for tourism in the Ibero-American region.

Official visits to UN Tourism HQ's and High-Level meetings (in person and virtual):

28. In October 2025, the Minister of Tourism of El Salvador, was welcomed in UN Tourism to sign the Agreement on Family Friendly Tourism Project. Later in the month, the First Lady of El Salvador visited UN Tourism Headquarters being, El Salvador, recognized as the world's first "Family Friendly" destination by UN Tourism.
29. In January 2026, UN Tourism held meetings with high-level Tourism Authorities during FITUR 2026 such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Paraguay, Peru, and Puerto Rico. Also, with other partner such as, the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean – CAF.
30. In February 2026, the Secretary General and the Premier of Bermuda held a bilateral meeting, in the context of the World Governments Summit, in Dubai.
31. In March 2026, during ITB 2026, meetings between UN Tourism and Tourism Authorities were held such as Jamaica and Venezuela.
32. A Reception of the Ambassadors of the Americas was held in March 2026 to foster international relations, promote tourism interests, and facilitate networking with this important counterpart such as the diplomatic body accredited to UN Tourism and to Spain.
33. Also, the Ambassadors of Colombia and Uruguay paid a courtesy visit to UN Tourism Headquarters to meet the Secretary-General in February and March, respectively. Continuing with the diplomatic body accredited in Spain, the Ambassador of Peru and Honduras and UN Tourism have been collaborating closely on connectivity and investments.
34. In April and May 2026, the Ambassador of Guatemala to Spain, the Permanent Representative of Dominican Republic, the Minister and Vice minister of Ecuador to UN Tourism, paid a courtesy visit to the Secretary General.
35. Also, in April, the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the Association of the Caribbean States, met virtually to explore possible paths for collaboration.
36. In May 2026, a delegation of Bermuda and UN Tourism met virtually with the aim to expand mutual collaboration. The Executive President of the Costa Rican Tourism Institute – ICT, virtually met a representative of UN Tourism. Also, the new Ministers of Tourism of Paraguay and Venezuela and the Secretary-General met through virtual meetings.

Official visits to the region:

37. Representatives from the Regional Department for the Americas and the Department of International Development and Cooperation, visited Dominican Republic, in October 2025, in the

context of the project “Support in the development and the implementation of a National Sustainable Tourism Policy and Strategy”.

38. El Salvador: In the framework of the 2nd Regional Conference on Women’s Empowerment in Tourism in Latin America and the Caribbean, held from 24 to 26 November 2025, in San Salvador.
39. Guatemala, in the margins of the Presentation of the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan of Guatemala and Round Table on Air Connectivity (3-8 December 2025).
40. Cuba, in the context of the 3rd International Seminar on Tourism Law, held in Havana, from 9 to 11 December 2025.
41. A representative from Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department, attended the 3rd Forum on Inclusive Tourism, in December 2025 in Cuenca, Ecuador.
42. Paraguay: Presentation of the updated investment guide and signing of the MOU with SENATUR to support the strengthening of the Camino de los Jesuitas en Sudamérica. (10-13 December 2025).
43. Panamá: A UN Tourism representative visited Panama in the margins of the Latin America and Caribbean International Economic Forum 2026, organised by CAF, and met the Tourism Authorities, in January 2026.
44. In March 2026, a UN Tourism representative was in Peru to hold a bilateral meeting with the Ministry of Tourism and to participate in the opening session of the Forum “Diversification of tourism offer in Peru”, organized by CAF and the Government of Peru. Also, a Memorandum of Understanding between CAF, UN Tourism, and the Cátedra Vargas Llosa of the Fundación Internacional para la Libertad, supporting the creation of the Literary Tourism Route, was signed on the occasion.
45. Also in March, a UN Tourism representative engaged in a mission to Bolivia to hold meetings with the tourism authorities, participate in a technical roundtable with the UN Resident Coordinator and the European Union delegation with the aim to present UN Tourism’s technical work on the ground and discuss potential avenues to enhance bilateral cooperation.
46. Medellin, Colombia, was visited by a delegation, with regards to the project for the development of a Case Study on Sustainable Urban Tourism.
47. In the context of the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, Uruguay was visited in March 2026, to present programme of work of the Observatory for 2026.
48. In April 2026, a Representative from the Regional Office for the Americas, attended the Tianguis 2026, held in Acapulco. In the same framework, the investment guide: “*Tourism Doing Business: Investing in Mexico*” was presented, along with a Representative from CAF (Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean).
49. Also in April 2026, a representative from the Regional Office for the Americas, visited Sao Paulo, Brazil, to attend WTM Latam & Minister’s Summit.
50. An official delegation visit to Bahamas took place in May 2026, in the context of the finale of UN Tourism Bahamas Sustainable Island Innovation Challenge.

B.Objective 2: Expanding the Organization and membership. Increase resources, capacity and ownership, through strategic partnerships

51. The 26 General Assembly approves St. Kitts and Nevis's candidature as a Member State, taking effect on 1 January 2026 thereby bringing the total number of Member States to 161.

52. The Organization received a letter dated 25 March 2026 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and Cooperation of Suriname, conveying the Government's intention to initiate the process of accession to membership in UN Tourism.

Expanding the Organization

53. The **Thematic Office for the Tourism Law Observatory** for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Observatory), based at the UN House in Montevideo, will continue its activities through the extension of the agreement with the Ministry of Uruguay until February 2027.

Developing new strategic partnerships

54. Aiming to achieve its objectives, UN Tourism is strengthening the cooperation with UN System entities, International Organizations, International Financing Institutions (including Multilateral and Regional Development Banks), through high-level dialogues with strategic partners, increasing coordination and capitalising on synergies in the sustainable development of tourism.
55. UN Tourism is currently negotiating Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and preparing joint action plans with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank Group (including IBRD, IFC, IDA and MIGA), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development expected to be signed in 2026.
56. The [One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme](#) further strengthened its role as a platform for multilateral cooperation, fostering strategic partnerships to support the implementation of climate action and circular economy policies and practices, to advance sustainable consumption and production.
57. The strategic initiatives of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, including the Glasgow Declaration Initiative on Climate Action in Tourism and the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative have continued onboarding new signatories. In addition, a [new initiative "Recipe of Change"](#) was launched in March 2026 by UNEP and UN Tourism to accelerate food waste reduction through private sector voluntary commitments and a progress tracking mechanism, building on the [Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in Tourism](#).
58. In November 2025, at COP30 a [Plan to Accelerate Solutions \(PAS\) for the tourism sector](#) was included under the UNFCCC High-Level Climate Champions Programme of Work. Developed in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism of Brazil and the Inter-American Development Bank, the PAS is focused on advancing towards the establishment of a Global Partnership on Enhanced Climate Action in Tourism by 2029.

C. Objective 3: Transforming the Organization for a better future. More agile and effective governance. Embracing UN values and multilateralism for realizing the 2030 Agenda

59. UN Tourism participated in the second International Forum on Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) General Assembly, fourth Steering Group and first Statistical Working Group (Madrid on 21-24 October 2025) meetings, and it is an observer in the Statistical Working Group, as TOSSD Data Reporter. The TOSSD is an international standard for measuring the full array of resources to promote the sustainable development of developing countries. It is a statistical framework, jointly created by a wide range of stakeholders. In 2025, its work was explicitly recognised in the "Compromiso de Sevilla" (Sevilla Commitment, outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development).
60. UN Tourism continues organizing outreach actions contributing to the implementation of the [flagship initiative "Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through tourism: Toolkit of Indicators for Projects \(TIPs\)"](#). In this context, the use of TIPs continues to be tested in the Tourism for Rural Development Small Grants Programme (T4RD-SGP).

V. Programmatic Priorities

A. Priority 1: Placing tourism in global, regional and national agendas. Building better and strong institutions: Data, Standards, Governance, Policies and Legislation.

Strengthening tourism institutional capacity and governance. Defining and implementing plans, policies and strategies

61. 63rd Meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members (FITUR 2026): celebrated within the framework of FITUR 2026 and officially opened by the UN Tourism Secretary-General, marked the first Board meeting of the 2026–2029 mandate, advancing governance discussions and reinforcing Affiliate Members' engagement in key UN Tourism initiatives.
62. UN Tourism and IATA have strengthened their collaboration to enhance connectivity across the Americas. The Organization participated in key regional meetings, as the **Aviation Day** (El Salvador, December 2025) which convene aviation leaders, regulators, and experts to address critical air transport issues and advance actions positioning air travel as a driver of economic and social development in the region.
63. The **World Tourism Report (WTR)** is a UN Tourism flagship initiative approved by the 25th session of the UN Tourism General Assembly through Resolution 757(XXV) with the objective of benchmarking countries' performance and policy enablers for tourism development. The Report, an extrabudgetary initiative supported by Visa and Booking.com, is expected to be published in the second half of 2026. The WTR is structured around four core sections: Policy Enablers, Performance, Foresight and Thematic Chapters, including a self-assessment by Member States on over 100 indicators of policy enablers.
64. The **UN Tourism Ministers' Summit at ITB**, held on 2 March 2026 under the theme "Empowering Emerging Destinations: From Potential to Performance," convened 12 Ministers and key stakeholders, including Affiliate Members ICCA and Trip.com. Discussions focused on governance frameworks, investment aligned with destination priorities, skills and human capital development, and public–private partnerships. Conclusions emphasized the importance of cooperation, investment in human capital, training, digital readiness, and community empowerment to advance emerging destinations.
65. The **Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (CTC)**, a subsidiary body of the Executive Council, held its 17th meeting on 7 November 2025 in Riyadh and its 18th meeting on 20 January 2026 in Madrid, on the occasion of FITUR. [See report CE/126/6](#)

Reviewing, strengthening and harmonizing legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to tourism. Promoting Tourism Law activities

66. The 3rd International Seminar on Tourism Law was held in Havana, Cuba, from 9 to 11 December 2025, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism of Cuba and the Universidad de La Habana, under the theme "Challenges of Tourism Law." It addressed key legal issues including territorial planning, climate change impacts on coastal areas, short-term rental regulation and artificial intelligence governance in tourism. The programme featured roundtables with United Nations representatives (UNESCO, ICAO and the UN Office of Legal Affairs) and global experts from the public, private, and academic sectors, as well as a training on the implementation of international standards on universal accessibility. Recommendations and conclusions of the Seminar are available at ([link](#)).
67. UN Tourism is collaborating with the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic on the development of a Tourism Framework Law as part of its national strategy for sustainable tourism. For further information on these projects.

Tourism Law Observatory

68. Uruguay: The Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Observatory), established in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and hosted by

Uruguay at the UN House in Montevideo, pursuant to Resolution 785(XXVI) of the 26th session of the General Assembly, has launched its 2026 activities in line with its annual Programme of Work developed in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay. A dedicated survey will be shared again with Member States to continuously identify priority themes and guide activities tailored to the region's needs.

69. As part of its 2026 activities, during the first semester, the LAC Observatory is carrying out several pilot projects in Uruguay, which will later be extended to all Member States of the region through tailored recommendations. These include developing technical guidelines for the implementation of Uruguayan Law 20.325 on Tourism Rentals; analysing the labour rights of women working in the tourism sector; and providing training for private-sector stakeholders on the implementation of international standards for universal accessibility.
70. Additionally, ongoing key activities include: providing legal recommendations for the drafting of a model Tourism Law; developing indicators to assess the implementation of UN Tourism standards and definitions within regional tourism legislation; conducting a comparative study on intellectual property rights in collaboration with the Colombian Hotel and Tourism Association; drafting the Tourism Framework Law for the Dominican Republic; and organizing the second edition of the Regional Congress.

International Code for the Protection of Tourists

71. UN Tourism has been actively supporting Member States in developing and harmonizing legal and regulatory frameworks for the protection of tourists, including in situations of international crisis. Since the adoption of the International Code for the Protection of Tourists (ICPT) five years ago, thirty-two (32) Member States have adhered to it.
72. The ICPT Technical Committee established by the 124th and 125th sessions of the Executive Council, through decision 4(CXXIV) and decision 3(CXXV) respectively, is expected to hold its first meeting in the second semester of 2026 to assist the Secretary-General in promoting, monitoring and advancing the effective application of the ICPT by States and other stakeholders having adhered thereto.

Facilitating access to development finance

73. Since the operationalization of the [Interinstitutional Working Group on Tourism and Climate Action](#) in November 2025, coordination with its members has continued. A two-year Work Plan, building on the activities of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme and including a focus on access to development finance, is being submitted to the 126th Session of the Executive Council for approval.
74. To maintain coordination with other entities active in the space of tourism and tourism statistics, UN Tourism participated in the OECD 116th session of the Tourism Committee (6-7 October 2025).
75. UN Tourism signed a MoU with TUI Care Foundation, consolidating ongoing collaboration and expanding synergies to promote tourism as an important driver of economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability.
76. A Letter of Intent (LoI) to be signed with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Central American Tourism Integration Secretary (SITCA), recognizing the importance of the contribution of sustainable tourism development to community and rural empowerment in the SICA region and the willingness of the parties to combine efforts and work together in the achievement of shared objectives.

Scaling up the evidence base for tourism

77. New data updates are available in the [UN Tourism Statistics Database](#), which provide over 300 key tourism statistics on inbound, outbound and domestic tourism, tourism industries, employment in tourism, trade-based indicators, tourism GDP, and tourism SDG indicators. Apart from the online dissemination (<https://www.untourism.int/tourism-statistics/tourism-statistics->

[database](#)), data are also available through the [eLibrary](#), and feed into several UN Tourism data products and reports.

78. UN Tourism continues to uphold its role as the official United Nations custodian agency for SDG indicators 8.9.1 (tourism direct GDP), 8.9.2 (employment in tourism industries), and 12.b.1 (implementation of tools to monitor the economic and environmental aspects of tourism sustainability). In the first quarter of 2026, the Organization completed the annual compilation, validation, organization, and submission to the UN of the data for these indicators. This data will be included in the global SDG Indicators Database. Accompanying metadata and brief analytical storylines have also been submitted to feed the UN's various reports on progress towards the SDGs.

Measuring what matters: UN standards to advance tourism data

79. The United Nations General Assembly recognized the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism as the first sector-specific model to go beyond gross domestic product metrics (<https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/220>), thereby positioning tourism at the forefront of efforts to develop more holistic measures of progress.
80. UN Tourism contributed to the revision of key international statistical frameworks that are relevant for tourism. Tourism is an important component of trade in services, and the Organization has therefore been actively involved in the revision of the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2026 that has recently been endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission (at its 57th session, 3-6 March 2026, New York).
81. UN Tourism continues to collaborate with countries, the OECD and Eurostat on developing a core set of tourism sustainability indicators based on the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism. This work, mandated by Member States and guided by the agreed intergovernmental work programme, is advancing through ongoing research and analysis to ensure the indicators are both feasible and globally relevant. The resulting core set will underpin international reporting.
82. **UN Tourism Committee on Statistics:** [See report CE/126/6](#)

Contributing to global official statistics, advancing related areas of measurement

83. UN Tourism continues to support countries in strengthening their **Systems of Tourism Statistics through regional trainings and webinars**. The regional workshop “Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism in Asia and the Pacific” (18–20 November 2025, Brunei Darussalam), co-organized with the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, brought together 100 participants from eleven Member States and highlighted the importance of reliable data for sustainable tourism outcomes. Additional capacity-building efforts included the workshop “Developing Indicators for the 2025 APEC State of Tourism Report” (25 February 2026) and the “Tourism of Tomorrow Lab Data Summit” (24 March 2026), advancing the development of sustainability indicators, fostering knowledge exchange, and reinforcing evidence-based tourism governance.
84. UN Tourism contributed to the session of the **UN Statistical Commission** (3–6 March 2026, New York), the highest decision-making body for global statistics. In addition to engaging in key agenda items, participating in relevant meetings, and holding bilateral discussions with countries and international organizations, the Organization maintained its longstanding engagement with the United Nations statistical system, reinforcing its mandate in tourism statistics and safeguarding tourism’s position within the global statistical framework.

Fostering public-private cooperation

85. UN Tourism, with sponsorship from easyJet holidays and Booking.com, is advancing the development of the **[Environmental, Social and Governance \(ESG\) Framework for Tourism Businesses](#)** – the first harmonized ESG framework tailored specifically to the tourism sector. Now in its third phase, the initiative focuses on defining core measurement themes and indicators.

Key deliverables, including the proposed structure, annotated outline, and a sample metadata sheet, have been submitted to the Committee on Statistics.

86. UN Tourism and the **UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics (UNCEBTS)** have formalized close collaboration, including on the organization of joint events, regular engagement, and reporting on progress of the ESG Framework. This strengthened partnership was reflected in the report of the UNCEBTS to the 57th session of the UN Statistical Commission.
87. On 4 March 2026 and in the margins of the 57th session of the UN Statistical Commission, UN Tourism organized a **high-level side event “[Bridging Macro and Micro Data in Sustainability: The Case of Tourism and the ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses](#)”** jointly with the UNCEBTS, and with the support of Statistics Netherlands and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN. The event brought together top representatives from national statistical offices, international organizations, and the private sector to shape the future of ESG measurement in tourism.

B. Priority 2: Market intelligence, rethinking destination positioning and product development

Data and Market Intelligence

88. Fifty Years of Tourism: Released on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of UN Tourism, this report looks into the development of tourism since 1975. Over five decades, international tourism has grown from 222 million arrivals in 1975 to 1.5 billion in 2025, driven by economic development and global connectivity. Export revenues soared eleven-fold, and tourism now stands as a pillar for many economies, fostering entrepreneurship, jobs and cultural exchange.
89. In October 2025, following the celebration of the World Tourism Day, UN Tourism and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) organised a second webinar of the joint series, where relevant trends in tourism were addressed.
90. Three issues of **the World Tourism Barometer** were released: in November 2025, January and May 2026. The January 2026 issue included preliminary results on international tourism for the year 2025 and an outlook of international arrivals for 2026. A PPT presentation version of the Barometer was also published with each issue, containing key graphs and findings. The **UN Tourism Data Dashboard** features the latest global tourism data and is updated on a monthly basis, including global, regional and country data, as well as industry indicators on air transport, accommodation, short term rentals and travel sentiment.
91. Integration of Affiliate Members in knowledge products (UN Tourism Barometer): UN Tourism further strengthened the engagement of Affiliate Members through an expanded participation of Affiliate Members in the Panel of Experts of the UN Tourism Barometer. New experts from 53 Affiliate Member were incorporated, increasing the total from 208 to 267 experts (+28% of Affiliate Member representation), strengthening market intelligence inputs.
92. Industry intelligence sharing from Affiliate Members (AMConnected+): UN Tourism disseminated key travel trends from Affiliate Members, such as the [Tripadvisor Trendcast 2026](#) and the [HBX Group Travel Trends 2026 Report](#), providing valuable industry intelligence, pointing to a growing demand for meaningful and experience-driven travel and helping keep the wider membership informed of evolving traveller preferences.
93. Affiliate Members Corner – FITUR 2026: UN Tourism organized the Affiliate Members Corner FITUR 2026 focused on [“Cross-Sector Value in Tourism”](#), highlighting new tourism product development models through concrete examples showcased by Affiliate Members from different sectors such as culture, music, wellness, retail, sports and hospitality.
94. UN Tourism contributed to the **UN's economic flagship report World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2026** by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) with the latest data on international tourism and an analysis of tourism-related inflation, the first ever global tourism inflation index.

95. UN Tourism prepared a **Brief on the impact of the Middle East** conflict on international tourism in the region with the aim of closely monitoring the evolving situation and provide regular updates. Various scenarios to measure the impact on international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts in the region were prepared, as well as the latest developments on tourism-related issues, such as air transport, oil prices and inflation.

Tourism for Rural Development Programme

96. The Tourism for Rural Development Programme is implemented in coordination with the **UN Tourism Regional Office for the Middle East**.
97. The ceremony announcing the villages recognized as **Best Tourism Villages** by UN Tourism in 2025 (fifth edition) –was held on [17 October 2025 in Huzhou City, China](#). 52 villages from 29 countries from all regions were recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism from over 270 applications from 65 countries received in 2025. Twenty additional villages from 16 countries were selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme and will receive dedicated mentoring in Q4 2026.
98. BTV awarded in 2025 in the region:
- Carlos Pellegrini, Argentina
 - Maimará, Argentina
 - Murillo, Colombia
 - Pacto, Ecuador
 - Aldea San Cristóbal El Alto, Guatemala

Villages selected for Upgrade programme:

- San Javier y Yacanto, Argentina
 - Lolol, Chile
 - Comuna Chiguilpe de la Nacionalidad Tsa'chila, Ecuador
 - Parroquia Biblián, Ecuador
 - Nopala de Villagrán, México
99. UN Tourism opened applications for the [2026 edition \(6th\) of the "Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism"](#) initiative on 27 February 2026. Member States are invited to submit their applications until 9 June 2026 and the villages recognized this year will be announced in a UN Tourism event in the last quarter of the year. Five introductory sessions were organized in March 2026 in English (two sessions), Spanish, French and Arabic providing guidance to Member States on the application process.
100. As a key component of the Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism Upgrade Programme, the **mentorship activity** has been implemented, starting from December 2025, supporting 18 villages from 15 countries selected in the 2024 BTV edition. Tailored recommendations reports are being developed by international experts and will be shared with participating villages and Member States, providing practical guidance to improve sustainability practices, operational performance, and tourism development strategies.
101. The **first BTV Monitoring Report** has been [published](#). The report aims to provide monitoring for all villages recognized as BTVs. This edition covers all 43 villages recognized in 2021 and highlights the villages' progress across the nine areas of evaluation of the BTV initiative. Findings show that 84% of villages have experienced positive changes in several key areas following BTV recognition in terms of economic opportunities, tourism management and development, and cultural awareness. The second monitoring exercise is currently underway for all villages recognized between 2021-2024 and will be published in Q2 2026.
102. A **good practices series from the BTV Network** is under development, with the first one on social sustainability planned for publication in Q2 2026. The collection and dissemination of these good practices aim to highlight the good examples from the BTVs, provide them international visibility and recognition, guide effective policymaking, support capacity building, and encourage peer learning across villages and countries.

103. UN Tourism and **UNDP have initiated a strategic collaboration** to develop a joint Knowledge Product on sustainable rural tourism, drawing on insights from the Best Tourism Villages (BTV) Network and approximately 40 UNDP Accelerator Labs. The forthcoming publication will synthesize lessons learned, proven solutions, and emerging opportunities across areas such as digital transformation, community-based tourism, biodiversity conservation, and economic resilience.
104. In the context of strengthened cooperation between UN Tourism and FAO, the **Guidebook for Sustainable Tourism Development in Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)** will be launched in Q2 2026. The Guidebook provides practical guidance, case studies, and recommendations to support sustainable tourism development, safeguard agricultural heritage, and empower communities to leverage tourism for rural development.
105. A full report on the activities and impact of the [Tourism for Rural Development Programme for 2021-2025](#) was released on the occasion of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the General Assembly in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Gastronomy Tourism

106. UN Tourism and its Affiliate Member, the Basque Culinary Center (BCC), will release in Q2 2026 a **compilation of best practices based on the implementation of the Guidelines for the Development of Gastronomy Tourism**. The publication analyses the application of the Guidelines across Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic (Brno), Chile, Mexico (Quintana Roo), Slovenia and Spain (the Basque Country). It examines how these destinations have adapted the UN Tourism / BCC Guidelines to design and implement national and local strategies, policies, and initiatives for gastronomy tourism development.

Wine Tourism

107. In the framework of the ninth edition of the UN Tourism Global Conference on Wine Tourism, held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in October 2025, the first [Global Wine Tourism Report](#) was launched. The report, developed by Geisenheim University, in collaboration with UN Tourism, the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), Great Wine Capitals, and WineTourism.com, provides valuable insights into emerging trends and market dynamics, offering destinations new opportunities to build meaningful, long-term connections with visitors. The study also underscores the importance of sustainability, storytelling, and digital engagement as foundations for future growth. For the occasion, UN Tourism also prepared a brochure on Wine Routes of Bulgaria, showcasing the rich and unique offering of this country.

Mountain Tourism

108. The thirteenth edition of the [World Congress on Snow, Mountain and Wellness Tourism](#) took place in Andorra, in March 2026. Held within the framework of the “Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions”, the Congress discussed the profound transformation that digitalization, artificial intelligence, and new technologies may have in mountain tourism destinations. On the occasion, UN Tourism presented the initial findings of **the report on “Climate Change and the Future of Snow and Mountain Tourism Destinations”** and discussed how leading destinations are adapting to new realities.

Urban Tourism

109. UN Tourism and UN-Habitat co-hosted a session at the **Smart City Expo World Congress**, held in Barcelona on 4 November 2025, to advance the agenda of sustainable and resilient tourism in cities. Entitled [“An Urgent Call for Resilient and Sustainable Tourism in Cities”](#), the event brought together representatives from Amsterdam, Barcelona and Rio de Janeiro, who shared their experiences and innovative approaches on governing and managing tourism growth to advance urban resilience and sustainability.

Destination Management

110. One destination management organization is currently participating in the **UN Tourism QUEST certification process**. The Destination Management Organization of Esquel, Argentina, commenced the accompanied self-assessment phase on 9 October 2025 and is currently progressing through the certification process. **Sports Tourism**
111. Launched the 1st [UN Tourism – FIA Sustainable Sports Tourism Awards](#) (Madrid, March 2026). Building on the partnership established with its Affiliate Member Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the **1st edition of the UN Tourism Awards for Excellence in Sustainable Sports Tourism Awards**, organized in Madrid on 19 March 2026, marked a key milestone in advancing a more sustainable sports tourism industry. The Awards recognized outstanding initiatives that demonstrate sustainability, innovation, community impact and strong public-private collaboration. 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.
112. Signed 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.
113. 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 FAEVT and the Buenos Aires Tourism Board.
114. **Astrotourism development:** UN Tourism launched the publication [“A Guide for the Development of Astrotourism”](#) (January 2026, within FITUR), developed in collaboration with Affiliate Member Fundación Starlight. The guide provides practical guidance for destinations to develop sustainable astrotourism products while protecting dark skies as natural heritage and engaging local communities. 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.
115. **Audiovisual tourism:** UN Tourism supported the [World Tourism Film Awards](#) 2025, recognizing excellence in destination marketing.
116. Research partnerships with Affiliate Members: Initiated co-edition agreements on thermal tourism (in collaboration with EHTTA - European Historic Thermal Towns Association) and connectivity strategies in emerging destinations (in collaboration with ICF), to support product development.
117. **Other products:** The Embassy of Colombia in Madrid, the Government of Colombia and UN Tourism, are supporting the Coffee Master Spain Program (coffee route in Madrid) which has established itself as a strategic platform to highlight Colombian specialty coffee, directly connecting their coffee growers with the sophisticated Spanish market.

C.Priority 3: Fostering sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change. Promoting greener and circular practices Climate Action

118. Tourism gained increased visibility in the global climate agenda through the inclusion of [Thematic Days at UN Climate Change COP30 in Belém](#), Brazil. As an outcome of COP30, a Plan to Accelerate Solutions for Tourism was included under the UNFCCC High-Level Climate Champions programme of work, aimed at supporting the development of a Global Partnership on Enhanced Climate Action in Tourism by 2029 and scaling practical mitigation and adaptation solutions across the tourism sector.

119. At COP30 in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025, tourism gained greater visibility in the global climate agenda as a sector capable of accelerating climate solutions. UN Tourism, together with Brazil's Ministry of Tourism and with support from UNEP, convened two high-level [Tourism Thematic Days](#). To facilitate broader peer-to-peer learning during COP30, UN Tourism also co-organized an [online event](#) with Travalyst and the Travel Foundation. The events (in person and online) were attended by over 1,000 stakeholders from more than 60 countries. Governance emerged as a key priority, highlighting the role of the Interinstitutional Working Group on Tourism and Climate Action and the development of a Global Partnership for Enhanced Climate Action in Tourism by 2029, as mechanisms to scale efforts. Within the framework of the Glasgow Declaration Initiative, a series of 10 new [case studies](#) from the signatories has been developed offering valuable insights on how to progress along the various strategic pathways outlined in the Glasgow Declaration.
120. In February 2026 and on the occasion of the UN Global Tourism Resilience Day, UN Tourism, with support of UNEP and within the framework of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, organized two "[Global Roundtables: Towards low carbon and climate resilient tourism](#)". The discussions focused on how tourism can advance low-carbon and climate-resilient development. Building on the outcomes of COP29 and COP30, the roundtables explored how to scale integrated solutions across mitigation, adaptation and circular economy approaches, while fostering knowledge exchange and strategic collaboration to accelerate action at destination and industry levels. Speakers included representatives of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of the Republic of Maldives, the Ministry of Tourism of Brazil, and the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investments of Antigua and Barbuda. During the Global Roundtables, the draft [briefing paper "Regenerative Approaches to Climate Action in Tourism"](#) was released for public consultation.
121. In April 2026, the second meeting of the Interinstitutional Working Group on Tourism and Climate Action was organized online. [See report CE/126/6](#)

Circular Economy:

122. In January 2026, within the framework of FITUR, UN Tourism, together with Iberostar and in collaboration with **Circle Economy**, organized an event to position circular hospitality as a key lever for systemic transformation at destination level. The event convened corporate leaders to align future advocacy and action on the circular transition of the sector and featured the release of the publication [Towards Circular Hospitality - Transforming the tourism system](#), supported by UN Tourism.
123. In March 2026 and on the occasion of the International Day of Zero Waste, UN Tourism and UNEP within the framework of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, organized a Global Roundtable "[Mobilizing Commitments to Halve Food Waste in Tourism](#)". The event convened leading **tourism stakeholders**, including interventions from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of Türkiye, the Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru. During the event, the new initiative "[Recipe of Change](#)" was launched to accelerate voluntary commitments on food waste reduction and track progress. A total of 415 participants from 102 countries attended.
124. In October 2025, as part of the rollout of the Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in Tourism, UN Tourism delivered two capacity-building workshops in Rhodes, Greece and Mallorca, Spain, in collaboration with easyJet holidays and Winnow. These efforts informed the development of the publication [A Practical Guide to Reduce Food Waste in Resorts](#), released in March 2026 with support from UN Tourism.
125. Building on the implementation of the [Tourism Food for Good initiative](#): Co-creating Sustainable Food Systems in Tourism, a two-year action-research programme led by UN Tourism in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and enabled by the TUI Care Foundation, a survey addressed to the National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) was conducted and received over 50 responses. A Policy Lab workshop is planned for 28 May 2026 in Cambridge. Organized with project partners, the workshop will advance the co-creation of the 2040 Impact Roadmap for Sustainable Food Systems in Tourism with contributions from key stakeholders from different tourism industries and authorities.

126. The **Committee on Tourism and Sustainability** convened its twenty-second meeting on the occasion of Fitur in January 2026 where the Committee confirmed its role in guiding the preparations of the International Year. [See report CE/126/6](#)
127. On its twenty-third meeting of the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability held on 27-29 April in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, Members of the CTS have been invited to serve on the Steering Committee to support a participatory and regionally driven consultation process in preparing the 2027 International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism. Key elements of the International Year, including its thematic pillars, flagship events, capacity-building initiatives and the overall implementation roadmap were reviewed. The Meeting took place back-to-back with a CTS-linked pilot capacity building workshop which served as a pilot initiative to test elements of the capacity-building approach being developed in the context of the International Year.

Advancing evidence-based sustainable policies

128. The department of Sustainable Tourism and Resilience had reviewed and provided constructive feedback on 22 annual reports of the members of the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO), many through designated one-on-one sessions. It also engaged in membership consultations with 15 potential applicants, reviewed and provided feedback on applications from 8 candidates.
129. UN Tourism conducted INSTO webinars in January 2026 to explore what INSTO values most in reporting, while highlighting best practices that support the development of focused, engaging and resource-efficient reports that enhance the impact of sustainable tourism monitoring.

Biodiversity

130. UN Tourism continues strengthening its ongoing collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), providing tourism-sector expertise in response to **CBD COP 16** decisions calling for enhanced inter-agency cooperation to support implementation of Target 6 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The organization has positioned the tourism sector as a key stakeholder in preventing and managing invasive alien species, reinforcing its role within biodiversity governance mechanisms. As part of this work, UN Tourism contributed technical inputs to the document “Activities Undertaken in Collaboration with the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species,” prepared for the 27th meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in Panama City from 20–24 October 2025. Contributions focused on “Data and Information Sharing for the Management of Invasive Alien Species,” supporting improved access to biodiversity data and strengthening cross-sectoral information systems relevant to tourism and trade.
131. The first webinar in the **Nature Positive Tourism** Explained series, titled “Regenerating Destinations Through Nature Positive Tourism,” was delivered on November 19, 2025, by the Nature Positive Tourism Partnership (UN Tourism, WTTC, and the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance). It addressed key challenges in adopting a nature-positive approach and provided practical guidance and action-oriented tools to help tourism businesses identify priority biodiversity issues, align operations with conservation goals, and build effective partnerships. While the sector has strong potential to support conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and national priorities at the destination level, a significant gap remains in translating these opportunities into concrete action. Two additional webinars in the series are planned for the end of April and May 2026.

Women empowerment

132. The 2nd Regional Conference on Women’s Empowerment in Tourism in Latin America and the Caribbean was held from 24 to 26 November 2025, in San Salvador, El Salvador, within the framework of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. This meeting was organized by UN Tourism, the Ministry of Tourism of El Salvador and the Salvadoran Institute of Tourism. With the participation of more than 200 women entrepreneurs in the sector, the Regional Conference promotes the adoption of effective measures to encourage the creation of strategies and policies for the empowerment of women in the region, foster their leadership, and contribute to equitable tourism growth. Information on the conference is available [here](#).

133. International Women's Day 2026 was marked with a series of communications focused on: the announcement of the 'Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee Mentorship Programme', the release of new global and regional data on the proportion of women in hospitality employment and in ministerial roles, and the opportunities and barriers that women leaders face in tourism.
134. The [Global Report on Women in Tourism Transport](#), published in April 2026, was developed with the International Transport Workers' Federation. The report is the first to study women's participation in tourism transport employment at a global level, producing new data and insights into women's participation in the air, land and water passenger transport industries. The report's recommendations aim to assist policy and decisionmakers to address barriers, improve working conditions and increase the representation of women in tourism transport.

Cultural tourism

135. A representative of the Regional Department for the Americas delivered a virtual message in the **First Indigenous Tourism Summit in Latin America and the Caribbean (CTILAC)** organised in Popayán, Colombia by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia and the Indigenous Tourism Network of Mexico (RITA), in collaboration with the Pawanka Fund, Land is Life, indigenous leaders and other strategic allies in October 2025.
136. USI – Università della Svizzera italiana, in collaboration with UN Tourism, hosted a Workshop on fashion and cultural tourism in October 2025, in Lugano, attended by policymakers, academic researchers and industry professionals. DMOs of Tuscany (Italy), Ljubljana (Slovenia) and the Lugano Lifestyle Tech Competence Center promoted products benefitting both fashion and tourism sectors, sparking innovation and sustainable growth. Case studies from Indonesia, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and Tanzania also highlighted diverse ways to connect creators, businesses and destinations. Visit [here](#) for more information.

Accessible Tourism

137. The Accessibility Guidelines for Tourism Businesses, developed in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Agency for Business and Economic Development (AWE), outline five steps for tourism businesses to advance disability inclusion and accessibility. The document provides tools to enhance innovation and business performance through inclusive work environments and quality services that meet specific access requirements of clients with and without disabilities, as well as seniors. It also highlights how accessibility can strengthen the competitiveness of tourism service providers in the global market. The accessible PDF was produced by the ONCE Foundation, in compliance with the WCAG standards. Consult the full report in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
138. A Workshop on Accessibility to Cultural Heritage and Natural Areas, held on 9 December 2025 at the UNESCO Regional Office in Havana, was delivered by UN Tourism to promote inclusive access to protected cultural and natural sites. The session explored strategies to ensure accessibility to monuments, museums, parks, beaches, and natural spaces, while integrating accessibility principles into education across the tourism and cultural sectors.
139. A Workshop on Accessible Tourism, delivered on 11 December 2025 within the framework of the III International Seminar on Tourism Law, held in Cuba, focused on accessibility standards for national tourism administrations and private sector stakeholders. It highlighted the adaptation of tourism environments to international regulations and the role of service providers in the process.
140. Breaking Barriers: Good Practices in Accessible Tourism and Inclusive Employment, published in March 2026, was developed with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Agency for Business and Economic Development (AWE). The compendium features 11 case studies, including those from Albania, Ecuador, Germany, India and Jordan, highlighting how accessibility and inclusion enhance service quality, resilience, and socio-economic impact across the tourism sector. Consult the full report in [English](#).
141. With regard to the **Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics** and its Optional Protocol (FCTE), five States (Albania, Ecuador, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Seychelles) have acceded to the

Convention, two of which (Albania and Seychelles) have also acceded to the Optional Protocol. The FCTE has not yet entered into force. Member States of both UN Tourism and the United Nations are once again invited to express their consent to be bound by the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

D.Priority 4: Enabling economic growth, boosting investment and innovation

Scaling global innovation challenges and startup pipelines

142. The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was the date chosen by UN Tourism, CAF Development Bank of America Latina and the Caribbean and the Guatemalan Institute of Tourism (INGUAT) to celebrate the final of the Indigenous Tourism Challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean (9 August 2025).
143. In the same context, UN Tourism and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) organized a Webinar to present the results of the Indigenous Tourism Challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean (September 2025)
144. The Bahamas Sustainable Islands Challenge (launched August 2025 and finalized April 2026), the **first innovation initiative in the Caribbean** developed in collaboration with the Government of The Bahamas, received over 80 applications addressing coastal conservation, community-based **tourism** and green technologies. The initiative culminated with the selection of three winning startups, which will benefit from mentorship, acceleration support and access to potential investment opportunities, through its partners Katapult Ventures, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Climate Innovation Centre for the Caribbean:
 - Runner-up – Category 1: Ocean and Marine Conservation: Island Bey Coastal Stewards
 - Runner-up – Category 3: Green Tech for Sustainable Tourism: Coco Bliss Bahamas
 - Winner – Category 1: Ocean and Marine Conservation: Bluequest Bahamas
 - Winner – Category 2: Local and Community-based Tourism: Access Island Guide
 - Winner – Category 3: Green Tech for Sustainable Tourism: Out Island Water Company Recycling Program
 - Overall Winner – UN Tourism Bahamas Sustainable Islands Innovation Challenge: Out Island Water Company Recycling Program
145. The UN Tourism Social Innovation Challenge (launched September 2025) attracted 870 applications from 140 countries, demonstrating strong global engagement and reinforcing UN Tourism's capacity to mobilize innovative solutions at scale focused on community-based tourism, green projects, and inclusivity and accessibility in the sector. Selected startups will benefit from a Master's programme by Les Roches, mentorship by Plug and Play, and access to funding opportunities via Amadeus Ventures.
146. The UN Tourism Artificial Intelligence Challenge, which received 440 submissions from 84 countries, advanced into its acceleration phase (April–June 2026), providing selected startups with tailored training, mentorship and access to investors, culminating in a final pitch event in November 2025 with international stakeholders.

Advancing innovation through knowledge, capacity-building and policy support

147. UN Tourism contributed to the development of the innovation and entrepreneurship component of the Dominican Republic's National Tourism Strategy, including the design of a regional innovation competition and the mobilization of partners and sponsors. The project progressed through the strategic design phase (initiated November 2025) and will advance with ideation workshops in the second half of 2026.
148. Progress was advanced in the UN Tourism– Hotel and Tourism Association of Colombia (COTELCO) project, aimed at introducing innovative and technology-enabled approaches to intellectual property rights management in the hospitality sector across Latin America and the Caribbean, with the final report expected by the end of 2026.

Strengthening innovation ecosystems and partnerships

149. A strategic agreement with the Panama Tourism Authority and Central Link: Centre of Innovation for Sustainable Tourism (signed August 2025) established a regional platform to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in sustainable tourism, with a Programme of Work developed and activities set to begin in July 2026.
150. UN Tourism expanded its network of innovation partners, including:
 - a. Signing of an MoU with the Center for Music Ecosystems (CME) and UMusic Hospitality & Lifestyle (November 2025), leveraging the role of music as a driver of tourism development and job creation;
 - b. Ongoing formalization of collaboration with Abra Group (Avianca Airlines) (April 2026) to advance education, innovation and impact-driven investment;
 - c. Strengthened collaboration with the Ibero-American Business Council (CEIB) in the context of the III Ibero-American Tourism Forum (June 2026), which will address the economic and social impact of tourism activity across the continent.

Implementation of the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism. [See document CE/126/4-RC1](#)

151. Capacity-building workshops on “Unlocking AI in Tourism”, in partnership with Amadeus, were piloted for government officials, strengthening institutional capacities to adopt emerging technologies and integrate AI into tourism strategies.
152. Implementation of the UN Tourism Webinar Series: Artificial Intelligence in Tourism - Guidelines and Recommendations for the Public Sector. A practical training series designed to support public-sector tourism stakeholders in activating and applying the UN Tourism publication of the same name. Through three live webinars, the programme helps participants translate the publication’s guidance into concrete action, moving from understanding key AI concepts and tourism use cases to assessing institutional readiness, identifying priorities and planning implementation. Tailored for national tourism administrations, DMOs, local authorities and development partners, the series aims to turn the publication into a practical tool for governance, decision-making and responsible innovation in tourism.
153. AI Readiness in Tourism: A Global Maturity Framework for Assessment and Decision-Making. Following the mandate of the GA stated in the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism, the Secretariat presents a structured methodology for assessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) readiness referring to the capacity of governments and destinations to effectively adopt, implement, and scale AI solutions. The Global Maturity Framework identifies four core dimensions: data infrastructure, governance, strategy and regulation, workforce capacity and skills, and interoperability. These dimensions reflect the foundational conditions required for AI deployment. Each dimension is assessed across three maturity levels: Exploring, Implementing, and Consolidating. This approach enables governments to diagnose capacity gaps, benchmark progress, and prioritize policy actions and investments in a structured and comparable manner.

From Investment to Impact: Transforming Tourism Ecosystems

-Advancing standards, frameworks and best practices:

154. “Rethinking Investable Destinations: An Approach to Tourism Special Economic Zones (TSEZs)”. First global publication examining how special economic zones are evolving to support tourism investment and destination competitiveness. Developed by UN Tourism in partnership with the World Free Zones Organization (WFZO), it includes the first global mapping of Tourism Special Economic Zones, identifying 140 zones worldwide. The report provides a systemic overview of how zone-based instruments can help destinations attract investment and enhance sustainability and resilience. It aims to inform and set the basis for further global dialogue on tourism investment frameworks.
155. Report under preparation: Practical Guide on Financial and Non-Financial Incentives for Investment in Tourism (launching in June 2026), with the support of the Regional Office for the Americas.

Promotion: connecting investment opportunities and bankable projects with global capital

156. Individual publications of the Tourism Doing Business – Investment Guidelines:

Four new editions launched since the last Regional Commission:

- Honduras (6 August 2025)
 - Guatemala (9 August 2025)
 - Costa Rica (September 2025)
 - Mexico (23 January 2026, FITUR, Madrid, Spain)
- a. One edition has been entirely updated and presented: Paraguay (11 December 2025, Asuncion, Paraguay). This guide is currently being translated into English.
- b. Two editions have been translated: Argentina and Costa Rica into English.
- c. Four brand-new editions in preparation: Barbados, Bolivia, Jamaica, and Atlántico (Colombia), with a subnational level orientation)
157. Under its strategic partnerships' agenda, UN Tourism has further strengthened its role in advancing tourism investment by deepening cooperation with key financial and knowledge partners. In this regard, the Organization has signed a:
- a. Renewed Memorandum of Understanding with the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean -CAF (21 January 2026, Madrid, Spain)
 - b. In preparation a MOU with The Bench (10-11 June 2026, Toledo, Spain) a global platform connecting tourism investment stakeholders.

Capacity building: turning intelligence and frameworks into implementation capability

158. Technical cooperation project for the Dominican Republic: Under the Investment Pillar, the project delivered a diagnosis of sustainable tourism investment, identifying priority sectors, financing needs, and opportunities for public-private collaboration. Final outputs included implementation fiches translating recommendations into concrete actions, with proposed activities and indicative resource requirements. Following completion, discussions are underway with national counterparts to develop Phase II, focused on implementing the Strategy and its investment-related measures.

E. Priority 5: Investing in people

Secondary Education: UN Tourism keeps advancing tourism education at secondary level.

159. An MOU with the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and UN Tourism was signed in December 2025 to expand tourism education to secondary and high schools worldwide. The purpose of this collaboration is to create a new learning path on tourism, that will be available to over 6,000 schools within the IBO network.
160. Schools Embracing Tourism: UN Tourism is working on this new initiative following the request of the member states to integrate tourism in schools at national level.

Higher Education | University Level:

161. UN Tourism is supporting the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic in the design of the first master's degree in Tourism Law in collaboration with the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo.
162. UN Tourism co-branding academic programs: UN Tourism support academic partners of excellence co-branding their existing educational programmes, after a thorough review of the

curricular, and include UN Tourism contents and masterclasses. Partners then provide UN Tourism scholarships to foster high quality education accessible to all. Results:

- Integration of UN Tourism standards into programmes from 4 top academic institutions: Basque Culinary Center (Spain), Macau (China), BISU (China), and Anahuac University (Mexico). Several high-level academic institutions are currently in open processes to join this initiative.
- 24 scholarships awarded by UN Tourism for those programmes in this period.

Executive Education for life-long learning:

163. The Faculty Exchange Programme for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in collaboration with Les Roches, concluded in November 2025, in the framework of the Human Capital Development by e-Learning Agreement.

UN Tourism Online Academy

164. The E-learning platform offering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) designed to make quality education accessible to everyone, everywhere. UN Tourism partners with leading academic institutions for content development and tailors it to the platform's format for an optimal learning experience and has reached more than 13,450 users in the Americas.
165. Launch of new MOOC in collaboration with Externado University in March 2026: "Turismo basado en datos: asistentes de IA y perspectivas omnicanal" and 4 MOOCs in collaboration with Booking were translated into Spanish.

WhatsApp e-Learning Courses

166. UN Tourism has expanded its training reach through WhatsApp micro-learning courses, which have successfully engaged thousands of professionals with basic training to start working or enhance their skills in their current roles. Through a conversational format powered by AI, participants engage with content in a natural and accessible way, making learning both intuitive and effective.
- El Salvador. A WhatsApp e-Learning programme powered by Artificial Intelligence on Family Friendly tourism was launched in March 2026 with 2,500 participants. Over 1,500 completed it by April, earning their Certificates, while another 1,000 remain in progress.
 - Chile. A WhatsApp e-Learning programme powered by Artificial Intelligence on Inclusive and Accessible Rural Tourism was developed in April, and is about to be launched for 750 participants.

International Academies

167. UN Tourism is partnering with public and private sectors to establish "International Academies" that will help Member States improve their tourism workforce through quality and affordable education.
- The International Samarkand Academy in collaboration with UN Tourism is already operational. The graduation ceremony of the 7-months long retraining programme on Hospitality Management took place on April 3rd. And 3 new programmes started on April 15th: (1) Tourism Faculty Development Programme in Hospitality Management; (2) Tourism Faculty Development Programme in Hotel Operations and Innovation; (3) Hotel Operations and Innovation Retraining Programme for professionals.

UN Tourism on the ground 2025-2026

The International Development and Cooperation (IDC) Department focuses on delivering practical, on-the-ground solutions to support sustainable tourism development. It fosters cross-regional collaboration, implements technical projects, and provides direct support to the Member States through tailored interventions.

The IDC Department promotes sustainable tourism development within five strategic pillars:

- Human Capital Development: Enhancing skills and standards in tourism through targeted training.
- Strategic Planning & Promotion: Supporting sustainable tourism planning and development.
- Safety of Destinations: Creating frameworks to ensure secure and resilient tourism destinations.
- Data-Driven Decisions: Empowering stakeholders with robust tourism analytics.
- Silk Road Synergies: Promoting cross-border tourism initiatives through our upcoming thematic office

The below table provides an overview of activities that are completed, and under implementation between October 2025 and April 2026 in addition to the activities in the pipeline. Furthermore, country of activity, project budget and donor source, and overall tourism benefit are defined. The information is presented per region.

The AMERICAS

Completed:

Country	Contribution to the PoW priorities	Project	Year/Timeframe	Donor	Tourism Benefit
Guatemala	Priority 2: Market intelligence, rethinking destination positioning and product development.	Aerial Connectivity Assessment and Promotion	2025 10 months	Member State	Strengthening the country's position as a competitive destination in the global market, attracting new air routes and improving existing ones in the short and medium term.
Guatemala	Priority 1: Building better and strong institutions. Priority 3: Fostering sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience. Priority 5: Investing in people.	Updating the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan and Formulating a Short-Term Implementation Strategy	2025 10 months	Member State	Promote sustainable and competitive tourism development in Guatemala through the update, promotion, and preparation for the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan.
Honduras	Priority 1: Placing tourism in global, regional and national agendas. Building better and strong institutions	Technical Assistance Project on Statistical System	2025 5 months	Member State	Continuation of long-term statistical assistance project aimed at preparing the country for its first experimental TSA.

Ongoing:

Country	Contribution to the PoW priorities	Project	Year/Timeframe	Donor	Tourism Benefit
Colombia	Priority 1: Building better and strong institutions. Priority 2: Market intelligence, destination positioning and product development.	Case Study in Sustainable Urban Tourism for Medellín	2025 - 2026	Chamber of Commerce of Medellín – Affiliate Member UN Tourism Cofinancing	Generate key insights to inform decision-making and foster a sustainable, inclusive, and smart tourism model in Medellín, through a case study on short-term rentals, digital nomads, and the quality of life of local communities.
Dominican Republic	Priority 1: Building better and strong institutions. Priority 3: Fostering sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience.	Support in the development and the implementation of a National Sustainable Tourism Policy and Strategy	2024-2026 26 months project	Member State UN Tourism Cofinancing	Strengthen the tourism model of the Dominican Republic by advancing a policy-driven transition towards a more sustainable, inclusive, competitive, and resilient sector, while enhancing institutional and sectoral capacity, attracting investment, fostering innovation, and reinforcing its positioning as a leading destination in the Caribbean.
Paraguay / Jesuit Missions Route (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile)	Priority 2: Market intelligence, rethinking destination positioning and product development. Priority 5: Investing in people.	Tourism development and promotion along the Jesuit missions	2026-27 12 months with focus on long-term establishment of route	UN Tourism Regional Office in Brazil	Tourism route development project focused on building cooperation mechanism and tourism activities between 6 countries. Project commencement April 2026.

In the Pipeline:

Country	Contribution to the PoW priorities	Project	Year/Timeframe	Donor	Tourism Benefit
Colombia	Priority 5: Investing in people.	Vocational and Entrepreneurship Capacity-Building Programme for Tourism in Colombia	2026	Member State UN Tourism Cofinancing	Strengthen human capital and promote inclusive economic opportunities in emerging and vulnerable territories in Colombia by delivering vocational and entrepreneurship capacity-building through a locally anchored programme in partnership with universities and territorial authorities.

Ecuador	Priority 1: Building better and strong institutions. Priority 2: Market intelligence, destination positioning and product development. Priority 3: Fostering sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience.	Support for the Development and Implementation of a National Sustainable Tourism Policy and Strategic Plan in Ecuador	2026 – 2027 12 months	Member State UN Tourism Cofinancing	Strengthen Ecuador's sustainable tourism development through the development and implementation of a participatory, policy-driven national framework that fosters diversification, innovation, community engagement, and resilience, in line with international best practices.
Guatemala	Priority 1: Placing tourism in global, regional and national agendas. Building better and strong institutions.	Strengthening the country's Tourism Satellite Account	2026-27	Member State	Support the country in the revision and methodological development of the 10 tables conforming the country's TSA, including methodological review, field assessments and capacity building.
Guatemala	Priority 1: Building better and strong institutions. Priority 3: Fostering sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience.	Support for the Implementation and Monitoring of the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan in Guatemala	2026 – 2027 TBD	Member State UN Tourism Cofinancing	Support the effective implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan in Guatemala by strengthening governance, data and monitoring systems, and human capital, while advancing a more sustainable and resilient tourism sector.
Honduras	Priority 1: Building better and strong institutions. Priority 3: Fostering sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience. Priority 4: Enabling economic growth, boosting investment and innovation.	Development of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Investment Portfolio	2026- 2027	Member State UN Tourism Cofinancing	Ensure that the country's tourism model evolves in a sustainable, competitive, and profitable way, thus improving Honduras' overall standing and international competitiveness.
Perú	Priority 4: Enabling economic growth, boosting investment and innovation Priority 5: Investing in people	Tourism Microcourses for tourism stakeholders Tourism Route development assistance	2026	Member State	Tourism microcourses aimed at providing local tourism stakeholders with key know-how on how to develop local tourism initiatives. Tourism route development assistance, with a specific focus on knowledge transmission and capacity building.

