

Executive Council

126th session
Toledo, Spain

10 -11 June 2026

Agenda item 13**Report on the Affiliate Membership**

CE/126/13
Madrid, 8 May 2026
Original: English

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**Main outcomes of the Affiliate Membership since the 124th session of the Executive Council****Executive summary**

Considering the provisions of the Rule 4(2) (g) of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Council, the purpose of this document is to inform the Executive Council on the main outcomes of the Affiliate Membership since the 124th session of the Executive Council (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 8 November 2025).

During the reporting period, UN Tourism through the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration (AM-PPC) Department further consolidated the role of Affiliate Membership as a key platform for structured public-private collaboration within UN Tourism.

This period was marked by:

- A shift towards a more selective and quality-driven expansion model, strengthening the overall profile and engagement of the network
- Increased integration of Affiliate Members into the Programme of Work, knowledge products and institutional processes
- Consolidation of flagship initiatives, notably in sports tourism and emerging tourism segments

These developments reflect a transition towards a more strategic, results-oriented and impactful Affiliate Membership, aligned with the Organization's priorities.

DRAFT DECISION¹

Agenda item 13
Report of the Affiliate Membership
(document CE/126/13)

The Executive Council,

Having examined the report of the Affiliate Membership on its main outcomes since the 124th session of the Executive Council,

1. *Thanks* the Chair of the Board of Affiliate Members, the Secretariat, and the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department for the report and commends the Affiliate Members on the activities successfully carried out and on their valuable contribution to the fulfilment of the mission of UN Tourism;
2. *Encourages* the Secretariat to continue expanding Affiliate Membership through a more targeted, sustainable, and entity-based network expansion that adds value to membership;
3. *Emphasizes* the importance of strategic partnership between public and private stakeholders to enhance knowledge creation and thematic leadership through private sector expertise;
4. *Invites* the AM Board to continue working with the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership to strengthen the participation of Affiliate Members in the activities of the Organization; and
5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to further strengthen the cooperation of Affiliate Members with Member States.

¹ This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Executive Council, please refer to the Decisions document issued at the end of the session.

I. Positioning of Affiliate Members within UN Tourism

1. Affiliate Members constitute a key link between UN Tourism and the global tourism private sector, academia and other stakeholders. Through this framework, the Organization promotes public-private collaboration, draws on industry expertise for its Programme of Work, and extends its outreach through partnerships.
2. During the reporting period, efforts focused on reinforcing this role by ensuring more effective integration of Affiliate Members into UN Tourism's activities, strengthening their contribution to knowledge generation, thematic development and institutional dialogue.

II. Key results

A. Strengthening the Affiliate Membership (network and governance)

3. The reporting period marked a clear shift towards a more selective, structured and value-driven Affiliate Membership, reflecting the positive impact of the structural reforms introduced in recent years.
4. Following the update of the legal framework, including stricter provisions on arrears and the introduction of an application fee (January 2026), the Affiliate Membership has transitioned towards a more quality-oriented model.
5. After an initial adjustment phase, including the cessation of a consistent number of inactive or non-compliant entities, the network has progressively recovered and surpassed previous levels, reaching again over 500 Affiliate Members in 2025, with a stronger and more engaged membership base. Recent trends confirm this evolution:
 - (a) *A more selective admission process*, reflected in a decrease in the number of applications (31 applications in the first quarter of 2026 compared to 53 in the same period of 2025), indicating the filtering effect of the new framework
 - (b) *Improved financial discipline*, with over 30% of Affiliate Members having no outstanding debts as of March 2026, representing a significant increase compared to the previous year.
 - (c) *A continued reduction in accumulated arrears* across most regions, reflecting both stronger engagement and more effective follow-up mechanisms.

Region	% of Affiliate Members without debts	
	2025	2026
Middle East	30.61%	33.33%
Asia and the Pacific	22.81%	36.67%
Americas	10.78%	18.00%
Europe	20.16%	34.88%
Africa	22.22%	15.38%
South Asia	9.09%	50.00%
Total	19.44%	30.89%

Source: Affiliate Members and Public- Private Collaboration Department

Update: 31 March 2026

6. Overall, these developments confirm a transition from a volume-driven expansion model towards a more targeted, sustainable and value-based Affiliate Membership, aligned with the Organization's strategic priorities.
7. Key measures implemented during the reporting period include:

- (a) Launch of the Programme of Work for the Affiliate Members 2026-2027 through an open Call for Proposals, strengthening alignment of Affiliate Members' initiatives with UN Tourism strategic priorities
 - (b) Further consolidation of a more rigorous admission framework, reinforcing quality control and commitment of applicants, and
 - (c) Strengthened follow-up on membership obligations, contributing to improved financial discipline.
8. Institutional integration was further reinforced through:
- (a) The organization of the 63rd meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members, advancing strategic alignment for the 2026-2029 mandate.
 - (b) Active participation of Affiliate Members in Regional Commissions for the Middle East, Europe and the Americas, strengthening dialogue with Member States and reinforcing the public-private dimension of the Organization.

B. Delivering value through knowledge and thematic work

9. Affiliate Members continued to strengthen UN Tourism's knowledge base and thematic work through active participation and targeted contributions:
- (a) Expanded participation in the World Tourism Barometer, increasing both the number and reliability of expert inputs, and
 - (b) Dissemination of industry insights through dedicated platforms and thematic sessions.
10. Key thematic contributions were concentrated in innovation and digital transformation (AI, emerging technologies), sustainable and inclusive tourism (rural development, employment, food waste reduction), and emerging tourism segments (astrotourism, audiovisual tourism, cross-sector models).
11. The [Affiliate Members Corner](#) (FITUR 2026) further consolidated its role as a platform for cross-sector dialogue and exchange of best practices.
12. In parallel, concrete knowledge outputs were advanced in collaboration with Affiliate Members, including:
- (a) Publication of the ["Guide for the Development of Astrotourism"](#), providing practical guidance for destinations and reinforcing sustainable tourism practices, and
 - (b) Ongoing research initiatives on thermal tourism and aviation and connectivity, supporting product development and strategic planning in emerging destinations.

C. Strategic partnerships and initiatives

13. The reporting period further consolidated Affiliate Membership as a platform for strategic partnerships and high-level engagement, by strengthening the presence in leading global tourism platforms (FITUR, ITB Berlin, WTM Africa) and enhancing UN Tourism's visibility and engagement with key stakeholders.
14. During the period, collaborations were developed across academia, industry and international organizations, which include:
- (a) Academic collaboration with CETT Barcelona, advancing capacity-building in sports tourism
 - (b) Signature of cooperation agreements, including a Memorandum of Understanding with JATA, expanding international collaboration frameworks, and

- (c) Institutional participation in high-level platforms such as the [Africa Tourism Investment Conference](#), (April 2026) reinforcing engagement with investment stakeholders.
15. Affiliate Members also contributed to strengthening UN Tourism's outreach through innovative communication formats, including podcast series and media partnerships.

III. Priority initiatives

16. Sports tourism was further consolidated as a flagship area, combining strategic positioning, partnerships and concrete deliverables through:
- (a) Launch of the [1st UN Tourism Awards for Excellence in Sustainable Sports Tourism](#), positioning the Organization as a global reference in the field
 - (b) Signature of the Host Agreement for the 4th World Sports Tourism Congress (Mexico, September 2026); and
 - (c) Expansion of collaboration with academic and industry partners.
17. Audiovisual Tourism continued to gain strategic relevance as a bridge between tourism, culture and creative industries, through the institutional engagement in the World Tourism Film Awards (December 2025), organized by Affiliate Member International Committee of Tourism Film Festivals (CIFFT) and the continued collaboration in initiatives such as the Premios Platino del Cine Iberoamericano, organized by Affiliate Members EGEDA and Xcaret Group, leveraging global visibility to promote tourism and SDGs
18. Astrotourism was further advanced through the launching of the ["Guide for the Development of Astrotourism"](#), developed in collaboration with relevant Affiliate Members and destinations.

IV. Contribution to UN Tourism strategic objectives

19. Through its activities, the Affiliate Membership contributes directly to the Organization's strategic objectives:
- (a) Objective 1 (Leadership): enhancing knowledge creation and thematic leadership through private sector expertise
 - (b) Objective 2 (Expansion): strengthening partnerships and expanding the Organization's network, and
 - (c) Objective 3 (Transformation): improving collaboration mechanisms and integrating private sector contributions into institutional processes.

V. Forward outlook

20. Looking ahead, the AM-PPC will focus on:
- (a) Further strengthening the integration of Affiliate Members into the Programme of Work
 - (b) Consolidating priority areas of work with higher visibility and impact
 - (c) Advancing a more targeted and strategic expansion of the Affiliate Membership, including engagement with key industry segments, and
 - (d) Enhancing the strategic positioning of Affiliate Membership within UN Tourism and in relation to global partners.
