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UNIVERSIDADE DE TURISMO DE MACAU
Macao University of Tourism

UN Tourism
UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

MGM 美高梅

18th UTM – UN TOURISM TRAINING PROGRAMME
REIMAGINING DESTINATION BRANDING THROUGH AI AND DIGITAL MARKETING

22 – 25 September 2026
Macao SAR, China

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

~ as of 25 September 2026

DAY 0 – Monday, 21 September 2026

All Day Arrival

DAY 1 – Tuesday, 22 September 2026
(Venue: MGM Cotai Conference Room)

09:00 – 09:30 Transfer to MGM Cotai

Opening session:

*Master of Ceremony: **Ms Mary EDDY**, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)*

09:45 – 10:10

- Opening remarks by ***Ms Judy WONG***, Director of Global Centre for Tourism Education and Training, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)
- Welcome remarks (video recording) by ***Mr Shijun LIU***, Executive Director of UN Tourism
- Congratulatory remarks by ***Dr Iwan DIETSCHI***, Senior Vice President of Hospitality, MGM

10:10 – 10:15 **Group photo**

Thematic Discussion:

Restructuring Travel Discovery, Decision-Making, and Destination Competitiveness in the AI Era

Artificial intelligence is fundamentally transforming the way travellers discover, evaluate, and choose destinations. Tools like AI-driven search, personalised recommendation systems, short-form video content, and conversational assistants are reshaping every step of the traveller journey. For destination marketers and national tourism organisations, these shifts present both opportunities and challenges, especially when it comes to staying visible, and relevant in a world where algorithms increasingly guide traveller choices. This session aims to investigate how AI is rewriting the rules of destination competitiveness and what strategic responses the Asia-Pacific region must consider.

Session Moderator:
***Dr Irene CHAN**, Associate Professor & Director of UTM-CRCS Centre, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)*

10:15 – 11:30 **Keynote Session:**

- The New Science of Destination Choice: How AI Is Rewriting Traveller Decision-Making Models, by ***Dr Cathy JIN***, Associate Professor of the Department of Tourism and Marketing, Griffith University (GU)
- How Public Discourse Shapes Destinations' Visibility — Insights from European Tourism Intelligence, by ***Mr Andreas REIBRING,*** Senior Analyst and Hong Kong Representative, Kairos Future
- One Ecosystem, Every Touchpoint: An Integrated Approach to Modern Destination Marketing by ***Mr Leon LI***, Vice President of Public Affairs, Fliggy, Alibaba Group

11:30 – 11:50 Coffee break

11:50 – 12:40 **Panel discussion**

- *Dr Cathy JIN*, Griffith University
- *Mr Andreas REIBRING,* Kairos Future
- *Mr Leon LI,* Fliggy, Alibaba Group
- *Dr Iwan DIETSCHI,* MGM

12:40 – 14:30 **Welcome lunch** (hosted by MGM)

Session I:
The AI Platforms and Ecosystems of Destination Branding

Destination branding no longer operates in isolation. It is embedded within complex digital ecosystems of super-apps, cloud platforms, social media networks, and generative AI tools that collectively shape how places are perceived, experienced, and shared. Understanding these ecosystems is essential for tourism professionals seeking to craft authentic and compelling destination narratives at scale. This session explores the platforms and technologies that underpin modern destination branding, from cloud-based AI solutions and intelligent content generation to storytelling and experience design, offering participants insight into how to harness these ecosystems to amplify their destination's identity and reach.

Session Moderator:
***Dr Shanshan QI**, Associate Professor, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)*

14:30 – 14:50

- Presentation: The Challenges and Benefits that Generative AI Brings to Ecotourism Development, by ***Dr Shanshan QI*****,** Associate Professor, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)

14:50 – 15:10	• Presentation: From Inspiration to Loyalty: What Weixin Mini Programs and AI Reveal about the Chinese Traveller Journey, by ***Ms Xinye LI***, Weixin Mini Programs International Industry Manager, Tencent
15:10 – 15:30	• Presentation: Multimodal Data Ecosystems of Tourism and Changes in the AI-Driven Era, by ***Prof Louis LIU***, Professor of the School of Tourism Management, Sun Yat-Sen University
15:30 – 16:10	**Q&A and Panel Discussion**
16:10 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 18:00	**Country Presentations:** 1. Bangladesh 2. Lao PDR 3. Mongolia 4. Pakistan 5. Republic of Korea 6. Thailand
18:00 – 18:30	Transfer to Hotel Royal Macau

Free Evening

DAY 2 – Wednesday, 23 September 2026
(Venue: MGM Cotai Conference Room)

Session II:
AI-Powered Marketing — Strategy and Tools

As traveller expectations become increasingly personalised and the digital landscape grows more fragmented, AI-powered marketing offers destination organisations the ability to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right moment. Moving beyond traditional campaign approaches, this session examines how AI enables predictive audience segmentation, dynamic content personalisation, and data-driven partnership models that connect inspiration to booking. Through case studies from leading platforms and national tourism boards, participants will gain practical insights into deploying AI marketing strategies that are measurable, scalable, and aligned with their destination's brand vision.

Session Moderator:
***Dr Helmond IO**, Associate Professor & Director of International Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)*

09:00 – 09:30	Transfer to MGM Cotai
09:30 – 09:50	• Presentation: The AI Flywheel of Modern Destination Marketing, by ***Dr Helmond IO***, Associate Professor & Director of International Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)
09:50 – 10:10	• Presentation: Destination Desire: AI vs Social — *Why social creates the craving, AI helps the planning, and trust closes the booking,* by ***Mr Gary CHENG***, Global Head of Destination Partnerships, Klook
10:10 – 10:30	• Presentation: Smart Tourism in Action: How MGTO uses AI in Tourism, by ***Ms Cora VONG***, Acting Head of Organisational Planning and Development Department, Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO)
10:30 – 11:10	**Q&A and Panel Discussion**
11:10 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	**Country Presentations:** 1. Cambodia 2. China 3. Fiji 4. Malaysia 5. Maldives 6. Viet Nam
13:00 – 14:30	**Lunch** (at MGM Cotai - Hao Guo)

Session III:
Digital Trust and Cyber Resilience for Destinations in the AI Era

As destinations adopt AI-driven marketing, cloud platforms, and data-intensive personalisation, they face rising digital risks, including data breaches, disinformation, deepfakes, and manipulated reviews. For national tourism organisations with limited technical capacity, these threats can quickly damage long-built reputations. Digital trust has become a competitive asset, as travellers favour destinations seen as safe and transparent, while regional regulations tighten data governance requirements. This session explores how destination marketers can build digital trust, protect data, strengthen resilience in resource-constrained contexts, and leverage strong governance to enhance credibility and competitive advantage.

Session Moderator:
***Dr Simon LEI**, Associate Professor & Coordinator for Technology-Oriented Programmes and Courses, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)*

14:30 – 14:50	• Presentation: Protecting Destination Trust in the AI Era: Reputation, Resilience and Governance, by ***Dr Simon LEI***, Associate Professor & Coordinator for Technology-Oriented Programmes and Courses, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)
14:50 – 15:10	• Presentation: Cybersecurity Fundamentals, by ***Mr Derek WATTERUD***, Vice President of Resort Technology, MGM
15:10 – 15:30	• Presentation: Building Digital Trust through Ethical use of AI in Tourism, by ***Ms Orianne DERRIER***, Senior Project Specialist at Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific, UN Tourism
15:30 – 16:10	**Q&A and Discussion**
16:10 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 18:00	**Country Presentations:** 1. Iran 2. Japan 3. Samoa 4. Sri Lanka 5. Philippines
18:00 – 18:30	Transfer to Hotel Royal Macau

Free Evening

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DAY 3 – Thursday, 24 September 2026
(Venue: MGM Cotai Conference Room)

Session IV:
Hands-on Workshop: Hello, AI Agent in Tourism

This workshop is designed for zero-foundation trainees, aiming to help them gain an understanding on what an AI Agent is and how to use AI to automatically generate travel itineraries, using their own device and open resources.

Facilitator:
***Dr Fenix FENG**, Associate Professor, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)*

09:00 – 09:30	Transfer to MGM Cotai
09:30 – 10:15	• Module 1: Ice-breaking and concept introduction 1.1 What is an LLM? What is an AI agent? 1.2 Task demonstration: intelligent travel assistant
10:15 – 11:00	• Module 2: Tool preparation and environment setup 2.1 Preparing the API Key “Toolbox” 2.2 Setting up the programming environment
11:00 – 11:20	Coffee break
11:20 – 12:50	• Module 3: Hands-on practice: build your first tourism agent 3.1 Connecting ai to the real world (tool calling mechanism) 3.2 Writing core code and configuring prompts 3.3 Run and witness the magic • Module 4: Summary and Future Outlook 4.1 Review and elevation 4.2 Q&A
13:00 – 14:30	**Lunch** (at MGM Cotai - Hao Guo)

Technical Tour

14:30 – 14:45	Transfer to Grand Lisboa Palace
14:45 – 16:00	Technical visit at Grand Lisboa Palace
16:00 – 16:30	Transfer to UTM Taipa Campus
16:30 – 17:30	Campus Tour
17:30 – 18:00	Transfer to Hotel Royal Macau

Free Evening

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DAY 4 – Friday, 25 September 2026
(Venue: Macao University of Tourism, Mong-Ha Campus)

A Day for Culture Experience

Cultural Interpreter:
Dr Tammy KU, *Lecturer, Macao University of Tourism (UTM)*

09:00 – 12:30	Site Tour of UNESCO Cultural Heritage - Macao Historic Centre
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch at UTM Cafe
13:30 – 14:00	Transfer to Hotel Royal Macau
14:00 – 15:00	Break
15:00 – 15:30	Transfer to UTM Mong-Ha Campus
15:30 – 16:30	Chinese culture souvenir making

Closing and Farewell

16:30 – 17:30	Celebration of the 31st Anniversary of UTM
17:30 – 18:00	Macanese Cuisine Cooking Demo Venue: Demo Kitchen, by Chef of UTM Educational Restaurant
18:00 – 18:30	Certificate Presentation
18:30 – 20:30	**Farewell Dinner - Macanese Cuisine Buffet** hosted by UTM at UTM Educational Restaurant
20:30 – 21:00	Transfer to Hotel Royal Macau

DAY 5 – Saturday, 26 September 2026

All Day – Departure