





BEIJING CHINA

4



Temple of Heaven.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Basic facts

Beijing, the capital of the People's Republic of China, is one of the four municipalities directly administered by the central government. Beijing is the political and cultural centre of China and the centre for international exchange as well as science, technology and innovation.

Situated in the northern part of the North China Plain, Beijing sits next to the Bohai Bay and on the back of the Yanshan Mountain. It faces the Liaodong Peninsula to the north and the Shandong Peninsula to the south. The city covers an area of 16,410 km², including 10,072 km² of mountains, 61.4% of the total.

According to the *2008/2010 China Human Development Report*, Beijing ranks the second place among Chinese cities in human development index (HDI). In 2016, Beijing registered CNY 2.5 trillion (USD 375 billion) of GDP.¹ As of the end of 2016, the city had a total of 21.7 million of permanent residents, and a per capita GDP of CNY 115,000 (USD 17,300).

4.1.2 Infrastructure, transport and connectivity

As the main Chinese transport hub on land, Beijing provides convenient transport routes to economically advanced regions in the country, such as Southeast China and Southern China. Beijing-Shanghai railway and Beijing-Guangzhou railway are two major arteries in China's transport system. The annual passenger throughput of Beijing Capital International Airport, China's aviation gateway, surpassed 90 million in December 2016. The new airport of Beijing, which is expected to be delivered in July 2019, will be the world's largest aviation hub.

4.1.3 Overview of key attractions

With seven UNESCO heritage sites, Beijing is also the city with the largest number of world heritage sites globally. Beijing has 99 key cultural sites under state protection, five national geological parks, 15 national forest parks and 151 registered museums, including the National Museum of China, the largest museum in the world, and the Palace Museum, one of the world's five largest museums.

The UNESCO world heritage sites that draw visitors to Beijing are: The Imperial Palace Museum, The

Great Wall, Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian, Temple of Heaven, The Summer Palace, The Ming Dynasty Tombs, and Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal.

4.1.4 Tourism flows

During the past years, tourism development in Beijing has stayed on a fast track. There has been a steady increase in tourist arrivals and tourism revenue, both ranking it on top of Chinese cities. In 2016, the number of domestic and international tourists visiting Beijing totaled 285 million, up by 4.6% year-on-year, and total tourism revenue reached CNY 502.1 billion (USD 75.5 billion), up by 9%. Between 2010 and 2015, tourist arrivals increased by 8.2% per year and tourism revenue rose by 10.7% per year (see figure 4.1).

However, Beijing's inbound tourism flow has been moderately declining in recent years. In 2016, the number of inbound tourists reached 4.165 million person-trips, down by 0.8% year-on-year (see figure 4.2).

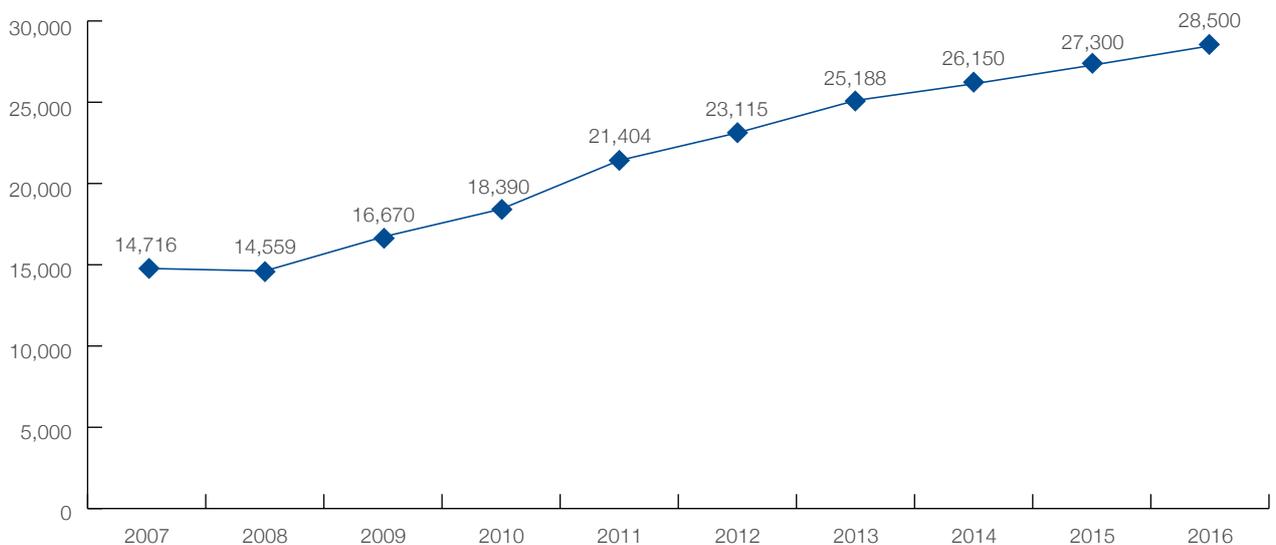
4.1.5 Tourism source markets and seasonality

In 2015, Asia was the largest source of inbound tourists² for Beijing (47%), followed by Europe (25%) and America (22%). In terms of countries and regions, tourists from Hong Kong (China), Macao (China) and Taiwan Province of China account for some 15% of the total, while foreign tourists account for 85%. Among foreign markets, the United States of America, the Republic of Korea, and Japan rank the top-three, followed by Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Singapore and the Russian Federation (see figure 4.3).

The average occupancy rate of the 504 star-rated hotels in Beijing demonstrates a visible seasonable feature: January and February are the slack season, occupancy rates are the highest in July and August (above 70%).

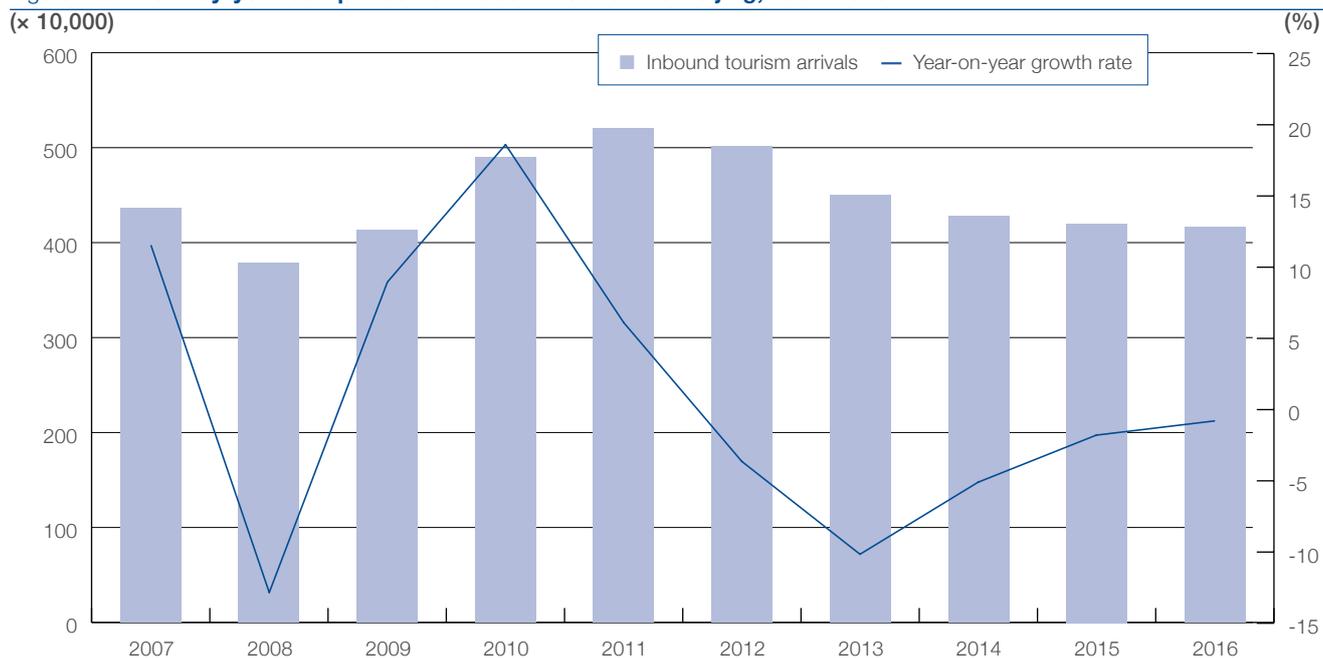
Apart from star-rated hotels, as of 2016, Beijing had 1,282 budget hotels. According to the annual reports of listed companies, the occupancy rate is over 80% for most of the budget hotels. With the rapid expansion of budget hotels, the demand for low star-rated hotels has been further reduced. Two-star hotels that provide homogeneous services will be gradually eliminated by the market (see table 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Total Tourist Arrivals of Beijing, 2007–2016 (× 10,000)^a



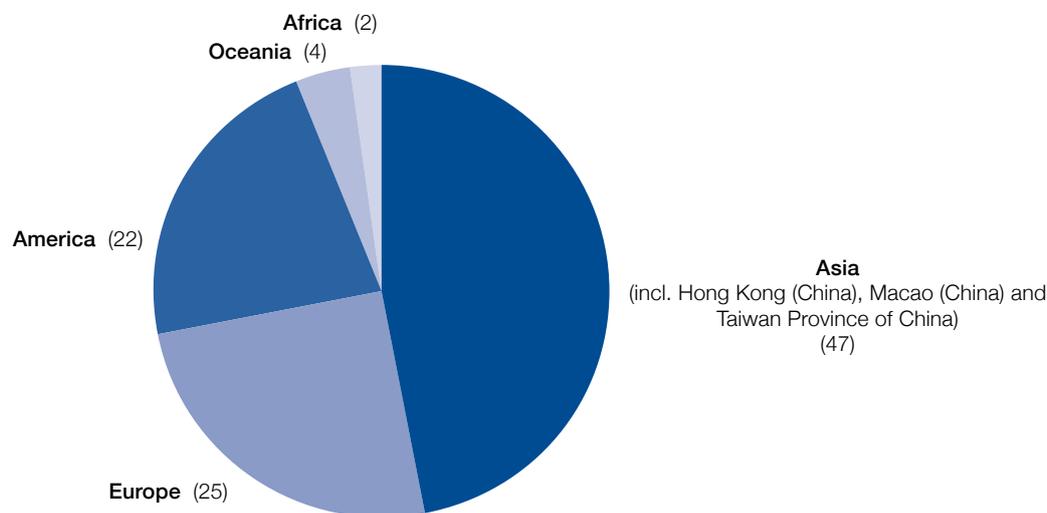
a) Unless indicated otherwise, all data used in this report are sourced from Beijing Tourism Commission, Beijing Statistics Bureau and other official institutions. Source: Beijing Tourism Commission (2017).

Figure 4.2 Year-by-year comparison of inbound tourism to Beijing, 2007–2016



Source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics (2017).

Figure 4.3 Beijing's inbound tourism market by continents, 2015 (%)



Source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics (2017).

Table 4.1 Average occupancy rates of star-rated hotels in Beijing, January–December 2016 (%)

Month	1–2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Occupancy rate	46.7	62.9	64.3	63.1	63.2	72.4	72.7	64.3	66	64.9	60.1

Source: Beijing Tourism Commission (2017).

4.1.6 Economic impact

Between 2011 and 2015, the added value of the tourism industry in Beijing grew 3.2 percentage points faster than the value of the third industry, and 3.7 percentage points faster than GDP. In 2015, the added value of the tourism industry reached CNY 172 billion (USD 28 billion), marking an average annual growth of 11.2% during the 2010–2015 period. The share of the added value of the tourism industry in the city’s GDP rose from 7.2% in 2010 to 7.5% in 2015.

- **Investment in the tourism industry:** in 2016, fixed-asset investment of tourism-related industries in Beijing reached CNY 79.55 billion (USD 11.96 billion), up by 11.7% year-on-year, accounting for 9.4% of the total fixed-asset investments;
- **Tourism jobs:** as of the end of 2015, the number of jobs provided by the tourism industry totalled 990,000 in Beijing, up by 69,000 over the 2010 figure, accounting for approximately 8.4% of the total jobs in the city; and
- **Tourist spending:** in recent years, there has been a continuous increase in the average spending of tourists in Beijing, especially that of domestic tourists. Between 2010 and 2015, the per capita spending of domestic and foreign tourists increased by 4.9% and 1.3% per year respectively. In 2016, the per capita spending of domestic tourists reached CNY 2,498 (USD 376), which is 2.66 times that of the national average of CNY 937.5 (USD 141.2).

In the 2016 catering (21%) and shopping (29%) were the main sources of tourism revenue for Beijing. 18% of revenue came from accommodation, 17% from long-distance transportation, 9% from sight-seeing and entertainment, and 6% from others (transport in the city, post and telecommunication) (see figure 4.4).

Rural tourism has had a positive impact on the poverty alleviation and income generation of farmers living in the suburb of Beijing. Between 2011 and 2015, tourism revenue in the rural area continued to grow, and its share in the total output of agriculture, forestry, husbandry and fishery industries rose from

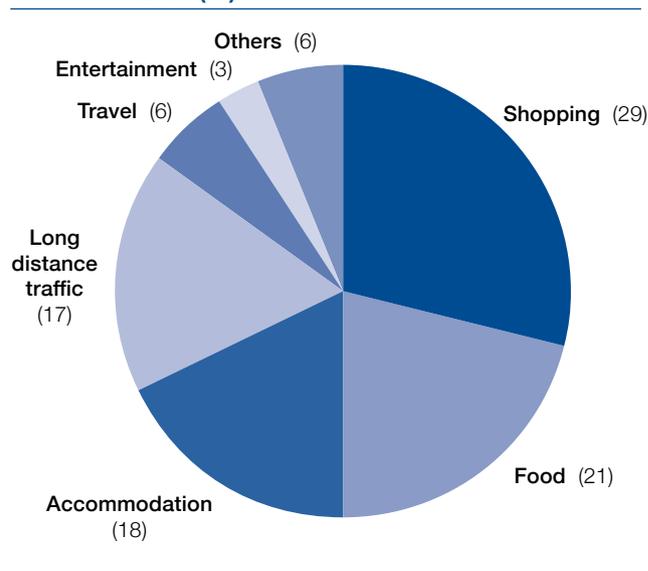
8.4% in 2011 to 10.6% in 2015. The development of rural tourism has brought a positive shift towards agriculture in city countryside. In 2015, the per capita disposable income of farmers living in Beijing’s suburb increased to 1.4 times that of 2011, the first year of the 12th Five-Year period. With the development of rural tourism, its revenue has become a major source of income for farmers, and rural tourism has played a significant role in the poverty alleviation and income generation of the rural communities.

4.1.7 Tourism enterprises

As of 2016, Beijing had 235 class-A tourist attractions (including eight 5A ones), 504 star-rated hotels, 1,282 budget hotels, 2,117 travel agencies, 41,811 certified tour guides, 141 star-rated folk villages, 4,008 folk households, 647 distinctive businesses and 33 distinctive tourist towns and villages.

In recent years Beijing could observe a decrease of star hotels which was accompanied by an increase of other types of accommodation, such as budget hotels, motels, homestay in rural regions, and peer economy.

Figure 4.4 **Composition of tourism revenue in Beijing, 2016 (%)**



Source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics (2017).



Summer Palace Pagoda.

4.2 Key performance areas

4.2.1 Destination management

Structure of the DMO

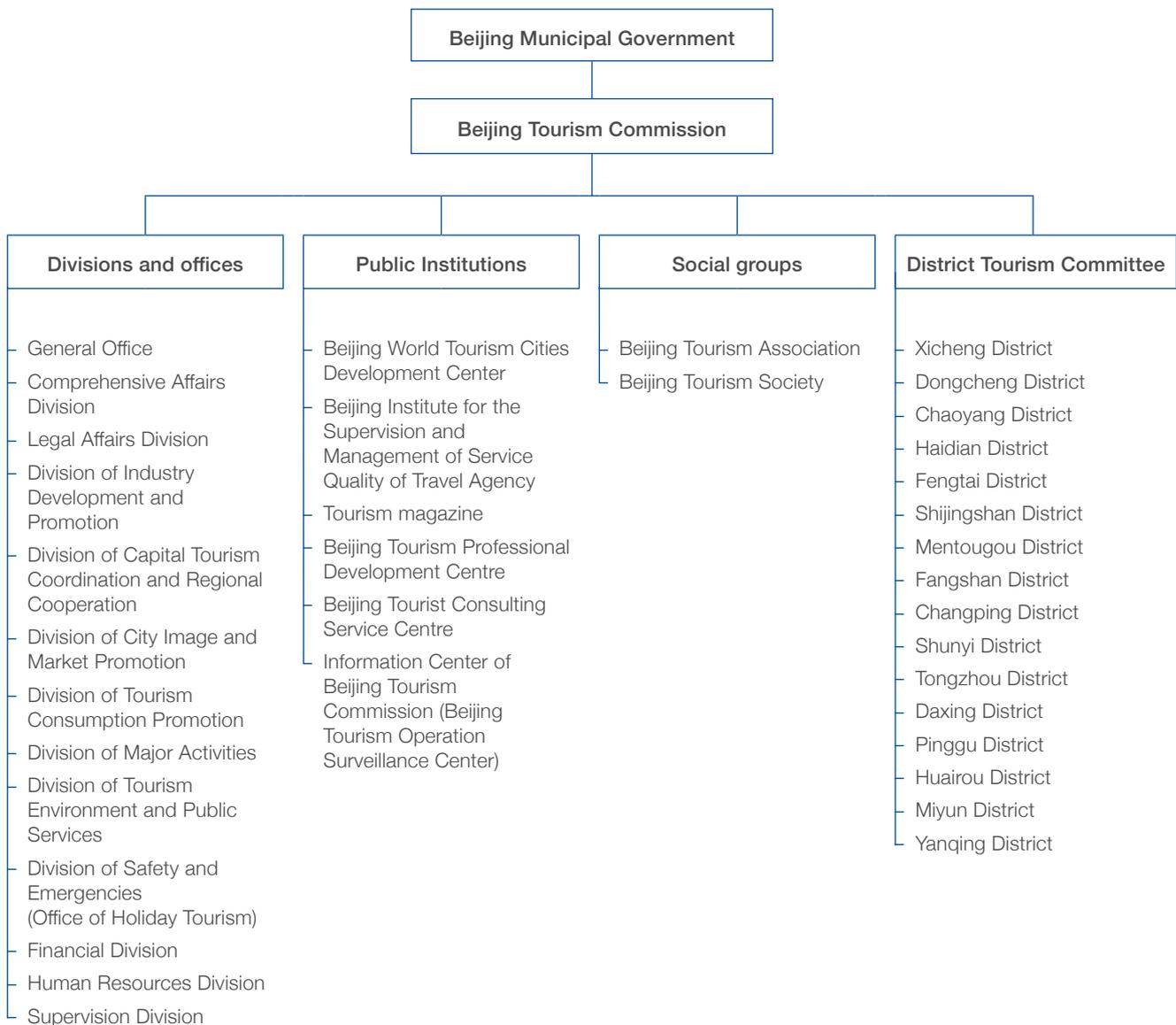
Beijing is the first province-level city taking part in the pilot programme of a comprehensive tourism reform. In 2011, the Beijing Municipal Government took the pioneering step of upgrading Beijing Tourism Bureau into Beijing Tourism Commission (BTC), and incorporated it as part of the municipal government. As a result, tourism development became a multi-agency effort instead of the work of one single department, and the functions of industry development, resource allocation, coordination and service supervision were strengthened. BTC mainly undertakes the following duties:

- **Strategic planning:** formulating and organizing the city's tourism development strategy, five-year development plan, action plan and policy measures;
- **Tourism development:** overseeing the protection and development of tourism resources, coordinating the development of the tourism industry, guiding the planning and development of key tourism regions, tourism destinations and routes and new tourism businesses, coordinating and providing services for tourism investment, promotion and major tourism projects;

- **Marketing:** formulating and implementing tourism marketing strategies, promoting the city's tourism image, conducting tourism exchange with foreign countries, taking part in regional tourism cooperation, organizing and coordinating major tourism festivals/exhibitions and cultivating tourism brands; and
- **Industry management:** overseeing the enforcement of tourism laws and regulations, drafting and organizing the implementation of local legislations, supervising the order of tourism market and quality of tourism services, managing the special fund for tourism development, strengthening public tourism services, and overseeing tourist safety regulation, tourism industry organization and management, and tourism professional training.

There are 14 divisions and offices under Beijing Tourism Commission. It also has several affiliated organizations such as Beijing World Tourism Cities Development Center, Beijing Institute for the Supervision and Management of Service Quality of Travel Agencies, *Tourism* magazine, Beijing Tourism Professional Development Center and Beijing Tourist Consulting Service Center as well as social groups such as Beijing Tourism Association and Beijing Tourism Society, which together form the basis of an organizational structure underpinned by government.

Figure 4.5 **Organizational Structure of Beijing Tourism Commission**



Source: Beijing Tourism Commission (2017).

Inter-agency meeting for tourism development of the capital city

Beijing Tourism Commission has initiated the mechanism of inter-agency meeting for tourism development of the capital city together with 80 other organizations, including ministries and commissions of the central government, to promote tourism initiatives such as 72-hour transit visa exemption, open day for tourists, tax refund for overseas tourists, customs clearance facilitation and expansion of flight routes.

Beijing Tourism Association

Established in 1993, Beijing Tourism Association is actively engaged in the protection of the interests of tourism businesses and the regulation of tourism market. It has drafted several codes of conduct for the tourism industry, including the *Credibility Convention of Hotel Industry in Beijing*, the *Credibility Convention of Tour Guides in Beijing*, the *Credibility Convention of Tourist Attractions (Spots) in Beijing* and the *Credibility Convention of Travel Agencies in Beijing*.

Beijing Tourism Society

Beijing Tourism Society is a public academic organization administered by BTC and a group member of Beijing Federation of Social Science Circles. Bringing together the best researchers in various fields, Beijing Tourism Society is actively involved in the research of tourism theories, organization of academic exchanges and publication of relevant journals. Since 2012, Beijing Tourism Society has published the *Beijing Tourism Development Report* (Green Book on Beijing Tourism) each year, which offers a theoretical review of the tourism development in Beijing in the form of annual reports.

The system of public tourism services in Beijing

A three-tiered management system consisting of municipal tourist service centre, district/county tourist consulting service centres and tourist consulting stations has been put in place in Beijing. The city also has China's first surveillance and control centre on the operation of the tourism industry.

Public and private sectors involvement

In 2016, Beijing Municipal People's Government issued the *Opinions on Promoting Reform and Development of the Tourism Industry*. Accelerating the transformation of government functions has been identified as the key priority for a comprehensive tourism reform. It is stressed, that the relations between the government and market should be clearly defined, administrative approval process should be streamlined, the role of tourism associations, societies and other social organizations should be further leveraged, and the development of intermediary organizations should be encouraged:

- **Beijing Trading Platform of Tourism Resources:** launched for the purpose of business investment in tourism projects, financing and equity trading of tourism businesses, trading of physical tourism assets and release of new tourism products for local governments, tourism companies as well as investment institutions interested in tourism

development. In 2015, the platform received the innovation award for reform and development of the tourism industry in China³;

- **Beijing Tourism Industry Development Fund:** the fund is mainly used to invest in tourism projects in Beijing's tourism industry zones, as well as tourism industry projects, products and activities in cultural tourism. As of the end of 2015, the fund had delivered CNY 821 million (USD 132 million) of investment to Capitalcopter (Capital Helicopter) and several other projects; and
- **Tourism PPP:** Beijing has vigorously promoted PPP (public-private partnership) in the tourism sector.⁴ Pledges were made to promote the development of cultural and creative industries with the support of private capital, to carry out construction projects such as the broadcasting studio and industrial cultural tourism zones of the new Beijing Shougang (Capital Steel); to encourage private investment in new tourism businesses, and ensure the implementation of priority projects including the Universal Studio Park.⁵

Tourism development policy

According to the *13th Five-Year Plan of Beijing Municipality for Tourism and MICE Development*, Beijing will focus on building a "first-class international tourism city" by boosting tourism as a pillar industry of its economy. Efforts will be made to turn tourism into a leading industry in urban development and transformation, a livelihood industry that delivers job opportunities and higher income and a happiness industry for better quality of life. Beijing aims to become the most favored destination city for overseas tourists, the leading tourist city in China, and the most visitor-friendly capital city.

According to the *13th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development of Beijing*, the city will make vigorous efforts to promote innovation in institutional reform during the 2016-2020 period to guide the building of umbrella-shaped international DMO, and invite tourism businesses, tourism operators and representatives of the city's residents to take part in the whole process of tourism destination management in Beijing.

Figure 4.6 Beijing's future destination management organization (DMO) architecture



Source: The 13th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development of Beijing.

The specific targets are as follows: by 2020, tourist arrivals will reach 320 million and tourism revenue will exceed CNY 700 billion (USD 105 billion). The added value of the tourism industry will account for 8% of GDP, and 1.1 million jobs will be provided by the tourism industry. Tourist satisfaction will be notably improved, with the goal of surpassing 83. The number of class-A tourist attractions will reach 250.

In recent years, Beijing has actively implemented the state policies for tourism development and provided systemic support in terms of land, taxation and finance based on the actual needs of tourism development in the city (see table 4.2).

It should be noted that there are some challenges ahead for the future development of tourism in Beijing. Firstly, the uncertainty of global economic situation and the transforming domestic economic structure may have some influence on the tourism development in China, including Beijing Tourism.

Secondly, the competition of tourism is getting more and more intensified and Beijing is facing more competitors both at home and abroad. In the age of high-speed railway, the increase of traffic accessibility will also lead to the further increase of competitive intensity of domestic tourist destinations.

Finally, like other mega cities, Beijing is suffering from *big city disease*, such as the high population density,

traffic jams, high cost of living, as well as air pollution. It is a hard task to improve the service quality for tourists, as well as the local residents. Currently, the central and municipal governments are trying to shift Beijing's non-capital functions to neighbouring Tianjin and Hebei. During this progress, it is a challenge to provide tourists with high-quality tourism experiences.

Marketing strategy and USP

Following the goal of building a world-class international tourism city, Beijing has conducted a vigorous tourism marketing campaign in recent years. Since 2016, Beijing Tourism Commission has organized a series of tourism promotion events on the theme of "Restart the Maritime Silk Road, Discover New Beijing" in India, Viet Nam and the Russian Federation, presenting the unique charm of Beijing from six different perspectives, i.e. ancient imperial capital, Peking traditional operas and arts, modern fashion, leisure life, dynamic Winter Olympics and beautiful countryside.

In 2017, Beijing has enhanced cooperation with overseas Chinese restaurants, Confucius Institutes, key Chinese airline companies, major domestic and international airports and important media organizations to showcase Beijing's magnificent natural landscape, colourful folk culture and distinctive tailor-made tourism resources and products (including traditional Chinese medicine tour, sports tourism,

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Table 4.2 **Policies introduced by Beijing to promote tourism development**

Ensuring land supply for the tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The management system for tourism land has been reformed and improved to promote differentiated land management and guide restructuring of tourism supplies; ■ The development plan of the tourism industry has been incorporated into the city's overall development plan, and the preferred location and required construction land of the relevant tourism projects and facilities will be fully considered; ■ More land is provided for tourism development in annual land supply. Key tourism projects with big investment and promising prospect receive preferential treatment in terms of the allocation and utilization of land quota; ■ Tourism projects developed on deserted mountains, slopes and beaches, landfill sites, abandoned mines and stony deserts receive more support; and ■ Rural collective economic organizations are encouraged to set up tourism companies with other organizations by acquiring shares with the use right of collectively-owned commercial construction land or joint operation.
Increasing fiscal, taxation and financial support for tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The trading platform for the tourism resources of Beijing has been strengthened and expanded to the neighboring Tianjin and Hebei area; ■ Greater support has been provided to the tourism infrastructures and public service facilities of key tourist sites, tourist routes and rural tourist zones; ■ The financing channels of tourism businesses have been expanded, and companies are encouraged to invest in, construct and operate tourism projects through public-private partnership (PPP); ■ Support has been provided for the listing of qualified tourism businesses, and financial institutions are encouraged to increase credit support to tourism companies; ■ Efforts have been made to promote the development of asset securitization products backed by tourism investment projects and the building of trading platform for the property right and operation right of tourism projects; ■ Tourism businesses with high expected returns and brand visibility are encouraged to explore the possibility of financing and fund-raising by way of mortgage on the relevant fee collection and operation rights; and ■ Companies are encouraged to build an integrated tourism industrial chain through such means as resource consolidation, asset reorganization, merger and acquisition, chain operation and management contract.
Improving the openness of the tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Foreign businesses are encouraged to invest in the tourism industry, take part in the development of profit-making tourist sites and scenic spots, and invest in tourism; and ■ The pilot programme for joint venture travel agencies to conduct outbound tourism business has been expanded, and greater support has been provided.
Supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in the tourism sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Various types of innovation players are encouraged to engage in online tourism start-up and innovation in keeping up with tourist needs; ■ Support has been given to the development of tourism innovation platforms, maker spaces, innovation bases and other new types of tourism innovation facilities; ■ Funding and policy support has been provided to encourage the building of "tourism + Internet" entrepreneurship parks, state-level "tourism + Internet" maker bases and state-level demonstration maker projects; and ■ Incentives have been provided to promote online tourism entrepreneurship and innovation and build "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" communities in the Zhongguancun Entrepreneurship Street.

Source: *The 13th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development of Beijing.*

exhibition and festival tourism and tour of classic cultural sites and museums), and launched a tourism promotion campaign on the theme of “Beijing Gourmet”.

Visitor satisfaction

The *Green Book on Beijing Tourism 2015*⁶ evaluates the quality of the operation system of tourism economy from a tourist’s perception. It consists of indicators such as the perception of the operation quality of tourism services, the operation quality of public services, the quality of city environment and the overall image of the destination.

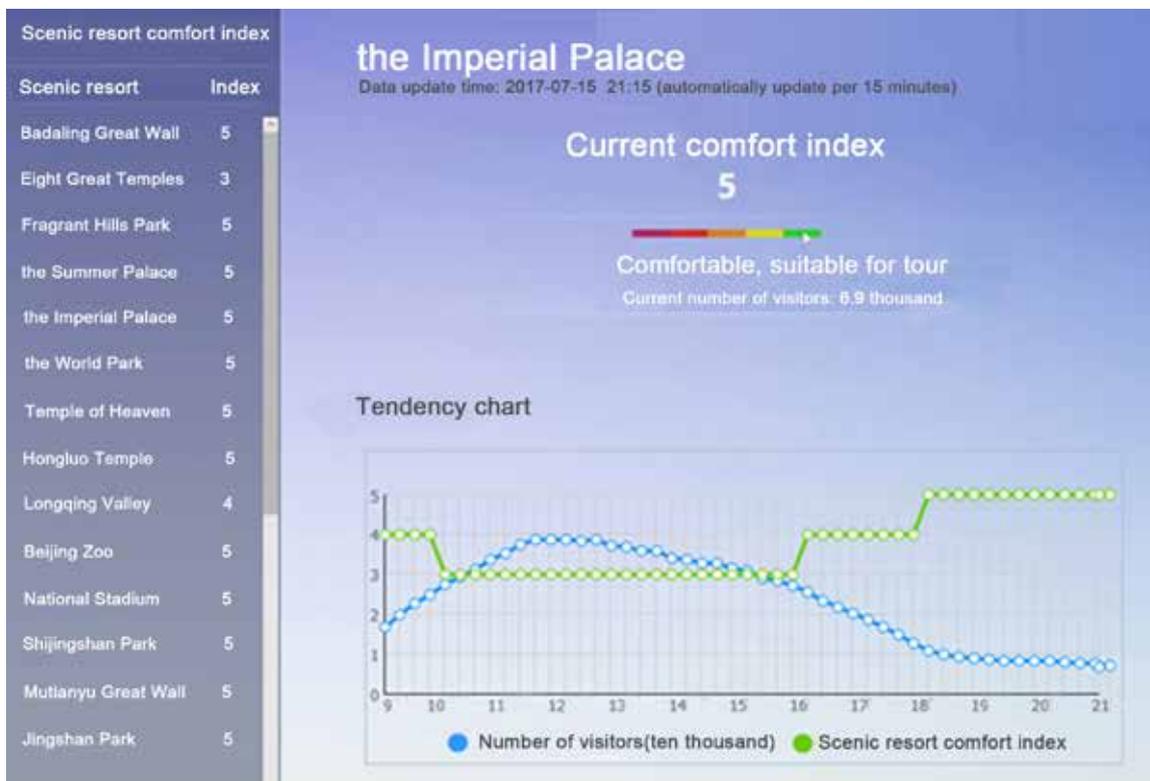
Overall, air quality, eco-environment and traffic congestion are the weak links of Beijing’s tourism development. Tourists have given average comments about the city’s catering, accommodation and travel agencies, and visitor satisfaction is relatively high with airports, train and bus stations, free wifi, self-help tour guide system and virtual tourism platforms. The

conclusion mostly consistent with the findings of the *Research on the Building of the Evaluation System for Visitor Satisfaction in Beijing*.

Beijing also has the country’s first province-level surveillance and dispatch centre for tourism industry, the Capital Surveillance and Dispatch Center for Tourism Industry Operation, to monitor tourism resources and tourism industry operations in the city and give directions in emergency situations.

The dispatch centre monitors tourist flow in key areas with high concentration of visitors, releases real-time data of the tourist comfort level, and provides real-time traffic and weather information. The data obtained by the dispatch centre is shared on a real-time basis on platforms such as Beijing Tourism Net, Beijing Tourism Weibo and Beijing Tourism Mobile News. In addition, media organizations such as CCTV, BTV and Beijing Communication Radio also send their staff to the dispatch centre to publish monitoring information and travel tips to help tourists make the best travel plans.

Figure 4.7 Real-time information of tourist flow monitoring in the Imperial Palace Museum



Source: Beijing Tourism Net (2017).



Tour boat on Beijing Beihai Lake.

4.2.2 Environmental perspective

Sustainable tourism policy and regulations

Beijing is committed to building a resource-conserving and environment-friendly society and promoting the conservation and efficient utilization of resources. It has promulgated a number of local legislations and pays attention to fostering the environmental awareness of the public and promoting a green way of living.

In terms of tourism, Beijing has introduced the green certification system for the tourism industry, called for the building of green hotels, developed green tourism products, promoted green restaurants, conducted green marketing and boosted the public awareness of green tourism. *The 13th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development of Beijing* adopted in 2016 pointed out that:

“Vigorous efforts will be made to develop eco-tourism in the ecological preservation zones of Beijing, ecological protection will be strengthened, and logging, pasturing and fish farming activities in these areas will be put under strict control. Motor vehicles will be restricted in eco-tourism zones, and the use of new-energy and clean-energy vehicles will be encouraged for tourism purposes. The tourism environment in

Beijing’s suburban areas will be comprehensively improved, and the campaign to reduce or replace the use of coal will be advanced in rural tourism zones. The green tourism plan for resource conservation and environmental protection will be implemented, and the concept of 4R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recovery) will be advocated in tourist sites, restaurants and hotels. Hotels will be encouraged to take part in the green certification programme, with the goal of making all high star-rated hotels pass the certification. The concept of green tourism will be promoted to raise the environmental awareness of tourists.”⁷

The Tourism Regulations of Beijing Municipality promulgated in 2017 stipulates that the development and construction of tourism facilities should be harmonized with the natural and cultural environment of the local communities, natural resources and historical features should be preserved, and harmony between the environment, landscape and facilities should be maintained. Tourism operators must take appropriate measures to prevent environmental pollution and ecological degradation.⁸



4.3 Success stories

4.3.1 The Imperial Palace Museum⁹

Introduction

The Palace Museum was the emperor's residence in Ming and Qing Dynasties and holds the title of key cultural site under state protection (1961), UNESCO world cultural heritage (1987), 5A scenic spot (2007) and class-one national museum (2008).

Objectives

The Palace Museum mainly undertakes the following three missions:

- First, as the world's largest and most well-preserved wooden-structured Palace Museum compound with a history of almost 600 years, and the national museum with the largest collection of ancient Chinese cultural relics, the primary mission of the Palace Museum is to "leave a magnificent Forbidden City in its entirety to the generations in the next 600 years". Therefore, facing the huge pressure of visitor flow, the most important thing is to ensure the renovation, protection and

inheritance of the ancient architecture and preserve the 1.8 million+ pieces of cultural relics;

- Second, the Palace Museum is the only museum in the world that receives over 10 million visitors every year. To present its splendid imperial buildings and precious cultural relics to the visitors and help more people learn to appreciate its cultural value is the second mission of the Palace Museum and also one of its key functions as the world's fifth largest museum. These functions are realized mainly through exhibition and demonstration, publicity and education, cultural promotion, digital media, tour guide services, customized tour and creative cultural products; and
- Finally, providing services of quality to the visitors is the third mission of the Palace Museum and its primary responsibility as a world cultural heritage site and a national 5A scenic spot. The main efforts in this regard include renovating service facilities, upgrading the sign system, improving information services, fostering a sound tourist atmosphere, undertaking social responsibilities, managing community relations, handling visitor complaint and conducting visitor survey.

Key strategies and initiatives

1. Protecting cultural relics and serving visitors

The biggest challenge for the Palace Museum is to properly handle the relations between protecting cultural relics and serving visitors. In recent years, the Palace Museum has made the following explorations to address the challenge:

- **The model of cultural relics protection and renovation guided by the approach of minimum intervention and maximum visitor access:**

wooden-structured buildings are highly vulnerable and the outlook and structure of the buildings in the museum cannot be altered at will. Repair and precautionary protective measures are needed for over 1 million pieces of collections in the museum, and many cultural relics have shown signs of decay, erosion, cracking and damage. Therefore, the following measures to address these challenges:

- Two major projects, (i) comprehensive protection and renovation of the ancient buildings of the Palace Museum and (ii) safe Palace Museum, have been launched to check the conditions of the buildings and cultural relics for better protection;
- Keeping the practice of daily maintenance and conducting both scheduled and ad hoc fixing to ensure the buildings always stay in healthy conditions;
- Ensuring minimum intervention in fixing, trying to keep the original status of the cultural relics and preserve the historical information in the best way possible, and paying attention to the inheritance of traditional techniques; and
- The *Integrated Plan for the Protection of the Palace Museum (2013–2025)* includes instructions on how to manage the relations between protecting and displaying cultural relics and handling visitor flow beyond comfortable level. Priority lays on the renovation of ancient buildings with serious safety risks yet significant benefits in order to gradually expand the space that can be open to the visitors.

- Including visitor flow management into the plan for cultural relics protection and the agenda for the management of the Palace Museum: During the decade from 2002 to 2011, the number of visitors to the Palace Museum had doubled to 14 million person-trips per year, and topped 16 million person-trips in 2016, which is unrivalled by any museum both home and abroad in terms of the speed and size of growth. The number of single-day visits surpassed 182,000 at its peak, which not only puts huge safety pressure on the 600-year-old Forbidden City and the ancient treasures in the museum, but also affects the tourist experience of the visitors. Therefore, to restrict and properly divert visitor flow became an urgent task for the Palace Museum. After several years of planning, a series of visitor flow restriction and diversion measures were introduced in 2015 (see table 4.3).

2. Expanding the function of cultural communication

Due to the constraint of existing exhibition facilities, only less than 1% of the 1.8 million pieces of cultural relics in the collection of the Palace Museum are on display. In recent years, while stepping up the efforts of the exhibition and display of cultural relics, the Palace Museum has also taken several measures to promote its culture:

- **Promoting exhibition and presentation:** over recent years, the Palace Museum has launched several permanent exhibitions (such as the calligraphy and painting pavilion in the Hall of Martial Valor, the ceramics pavilion in the Hall of Literary Brilliance, the gold and silver ware pavilion in the Palace of Great Brilliance and the jade ware pavilion in the Palace of Accumulated Purity), and organized a series of temporary shows, which have attracted a large number of visitors who are interested in cultural relics. In addition, the museum has worked with partner museums, both home and abroad, to organize joint exhibitions, and held exhibitions in the museums of various Chinese cities; and
- **Reaching out to schools and communities:** the Palace Museum has developed a customized education programme for primary and secondary

Table 4.3 **Visitor flow management measures introduced by the Imperial Palace Museum, 2015**

Formulating and implementing the maximum visitor load system	Based on the results of multi-year research, the information platform of world cultural heritage surveillance at the Palace Museum calculated the maximum single-day visitor load of the Palace Museum as 80,000 person-trips. In 2015, restrictive measures on visitor flow were formally introduced, combining real-name ticket purchase and online booking. The proportion of tickets booked online increased from 17.34% in 2015 to 41.14% in 2016.
Introducing the system of museum close on Monday	Following a one-year trial of half-day close in the afternoon, the system of full-day close on Monday (except for statutory holidays and summer vacation) was formally implemented in January 2014.
Improving lining management	Starting from 2013, the Palace Museum has increased the number of ticket windows from 16 to 30, resulting in an 87.5% expansion in ticket-selling capacity and significantly reducing the waiting time of tourists. In the meantime, the number of screening gates has increased from 2 to 18, making it faster for tourists to pass through the security check. In congested sections (such as the Imperial Garden and the Exhibition Hall), temporary visitor diversion measures have been taken, including on-site direction, kiosk closing, one-way route and limited access.
Increasing the space open to the public	In 2015, 65% of the space in the Palace Museum was open to visitors, 13% larger than 2014, including five areas that had never been opened to the public before. In 2016, part of the office and research facilities of the Palace Museum were moved outside, and the space open to visitors was further increased to 76%.
Strengthening surveillance	The Palace Museum has installed about 3,000 CCTV cameras to monitor day-to-day operation and conduct real-time surveillance on the visitor flow in entry/exit points and key areas.
Restricting motor vehicle access to public area	In 2013, the Palace Museum banned the access of all motor vehicles to the public area. All visitors, including state dignitaries, must get off the vehicle outside the Meridian Gate and walk into the Palace Museum. Such arrangement has prevented the potential conflict between the motorcade and visitors and the safety risks it may cause.

Source: *The research team on the public tourism services of the Palace Museum (2017).*

schools. In addition, famous scholars and experts of the Palace Museum have been invited to give lectures in universities, and customized tours are being offered to university students. In the meantime, the Palace Museum has launched a host of public programmes such as the Palace Museum Lecture Hall, Palace Museum theme day and Palace Museum classroom.

3. Improving tour guide and information services

The tour guide and information services of the Palace Museum are provided in multiple forms, through multiple channels and with multiple contents. While most of the international museums offer audio guide services in ten languages, the Palace Museum provides 40 languages. Most of the museum guides

at the permanent, temporary and special exhibitions of the Palace Museum are volunteers.

The Palace Museum has developed a digital Palace Museum system, which consists of official website, WeChat, mobile application, multi-media data resources and other information sub-systems. By connecting online with offline, it provides convenient and comprehensive digital information of the museum to the visitors. The visitors can look up for information about ticket booking, tourist routes, exhibition, cultural relics collection, safety and emergency instructions on the system. To stimulate young people's interest in traditional Chinese culture, the Palace Museum has opened a special website for the young people, using their language and animation tools to promote the Chinese culture.



Entrance to the Forbidden City.

4. Developing creative cultural products

The museum has developed an extensive portfolio of exquisitely designed, inexpensive, quality and creative souvenirs with the mark of Palace Museum. As of the end of 2015, the Palace Museum had developed more than 8,600 kinds of creative cultural products. In the first half of 2015, total sales reached CNY 700 million (USD 112.36 million), generating a profit of close to CNY 80 million (USD 12.84 million). The success of the creative cultural products has not only produced additional revenue for the Palace Museum, but more importantly introduced its rich culture into people's daily life and generated a far-reaching cultural impact.

5. Improving the quality of tourism services

- **Keeping the low-price strategy:** following the principles of using public resources for public purposes, setting prices based on cost and upholding public interest, the museum has kept a low ticket price for many years, i.e. CNY 40 (USD 6) in slack and CNY 60 (USD 9) in peak season. In addition, starting from 2014, free access to the museum is offered once a month (during slack season) to particular groups, including teachers, medical workers, volunteers, servicemen, policemen, university and college students;

- **Improving service facilities:** the basic tourist facilities of the Palace Museum have been upgraded and renovated, e.g., the signboard system has been updated, colours and patterns have been re-designed to match the majestic atmosphere of the Forbidden City, the locations of signboards have been rearranged to facilitate the visitor tours, a QR code is printed on the signboards so that the visitors could easily access information about the relics;
- **Sanitation:** the Palace Museum has introduced the strictest ever standards, requiring “absolutely clean environment inside the buildings, and no litter of paper in the open space”; and
- **Ensure that the tourists can “visit and rest with dignity”:** in order to provide rest areas for visitors, over 1,400 chairs have been installed in public squares and suitable places, and wooden benches have been placed around ancient trees, which adds space to the rest area, so that the visitors will no longer need to sit on the ground, by the tree or on the railings as in the past. To create a sound tourist atmosphere and prevent the noises of loudspeakers used by tour guides, the Palace Museum requires all tour guides to use oral interpretation. If oral interpretation cannot be conducted because of the number of visitors, the Palace Museum will provide automatic audio guides to tourist groups.



Chapter 4 Endnotes

- 1 It is based on the average exchange rate of CNY against USD by 2016.
- 2 China's inbound tourism includes foreigners and Hong Kong (China), Macao (China) and Taiwan Province of China.
- 3 From the official website of China National Tourism Administration: www.cnta.gov.cn.
- 4 Beijing Municipal Government (2015), Opinions of the General Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal People's Government on Promoting Public-Private Partnership Model in Public Services, Beijing.
- 5 Beijing Municipal Government (2015), *Opinions of the Beijing Municipal People's Government on Encouraging Private Investment in Priority Sectors through Innovation in the Investment and Financing Mechanism*, Beijing.
- 6 Beijing Tourism Society (2015), *Green Book on Beijing Tourism 2015*, Beijing.
- 7 Beijing Tourism Commission, Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform (2016), *13th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development of Beijing*, Beijing.
- 8 Beijing Tourism Commission (2017), *Tourism Regulations of Beijing Municipality*, Beijing.
- 9 The research team on the public tourism services of the Palace Museum (2017).