CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ..........................................................................................................................4
TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT & THE ROLE OF UNWTO .............................................................4
TOURISM & THE SILK ROAD .....................................................................................................4
MISSION & GOALS ..................................................................................................................5
MISSION ..................................................................................................................................5
OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES ..............................................................................................5
FOCUS AREAS .......................................................................................................................6
ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS .................................................................................................7
GOVERNING BODIES ............................................................................................................8
REVIEW AND PROGRESS 2011-2012 ....................................................................................9
ACTION & IMPLEMENTATION ............................................................................................... 10
MAJOR EVENTS 2013 ............................................................................................................. 10
FOCUS AREA I: MARKETING & PROMOTION .................................................................... 11
FOCUS AREA 2: CAPACITY BUILDING & DESTINATION MANAGEMENT .................. 13
FOCUS AREA 2: TRAVEL FACILITATION ........................................................................... 14
SILK ROAD ACTION PLAN 2012/2013

Enhancing collaboration for sustainable tourism development

WELCOME

Welcome to the World Tourism Organization's Silk Road Action Plan 2012/2013. Inside is an outline of UNWTO’s key strategies and initiatives planned to help Silk Road tourism grow more robust, competitive and sustainable.

UNWTO has been supporting the development of sustainable tourism along the Silk Road for many years. This Action Plan reinforces UNWTO’s commitment to working with stakeholders to stimulate investment along the Silk Road while protecting cultural and environmental resources and driving poverty reduction. This Action Plan focuses on targeted, pragmatic and collaborative activities with realistic and achievable objectives. Success will rely on dedicated input, engagement and support from the industry.

Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Today, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles. Tourism now represents an estimated 5 per cent of the world’s GDP and 30 per cent of global exports of services (US$1 trillion a year) and is responsible for one in twelve jobs worldwide. In the year 2012, it is predicted that international tourist arrivals will reach 1 billion.

All stakeholders have a role to play and by engaging in the activities presented in this Action Plan, you will help contribute to achieving a brighter future for Silk Road tourism.

‘The Silk Road Action Plan 2012/2013 is a call for stakeholders to join UNWTO’s efforts in building a stronger Silk Road destination brand that will attract the attention of tourists, media and investors globally. Let us work together towards a more competitive and sustainable future for Silk Road tourism.’

Taleb Rifai
UNWTO Secretary-General
INTRODUCTION

TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT & THE ROLE OF UNWTO

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, the World Tourism Organization is the leading international organization in the field of tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. UNWTO plays a central and decisive role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, paying particular attention to the interests of developing countries.

With impact on economic growth and development, tourism can make a significant contribution to address climate and poverty imperatives. Offering opportunities for entrepreneurship, it provides millions of direct jobs worldwide, as well as countless more through its multiplier effect on related sectors. It is already one of the largest employment sectors in many countries and a fast entry vehicle into the workforce for young people and women in both urban and rural communities.

UNWTO takes a leading role in encouraging the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, with a view to ensuring that member countries, tourist destinations and businesses maximize the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism and fully reap its benefits, while minimizing its negative social and environmental impacts.

TOURISM & THE SILK ROAD

Acclaimed as the ‘greatest route in the history of mankind’, the ancient Silk Road formed the first bridge between the East and West and was an important vehicle for trade between ancient empires of China, India, Persia & Rome. Dating back to 200 BC, the route was a channel for contact between people and cultures, inspiring the exchange of dialogue, art, religion, ideas & technology. With its richly diverse cultural heritage and its wealth of natural tourism attractions spanning across 12,000 kilometers of ancient routes, the Silk Road today offers visitors the opportunity to experience a unique network of destinations, following the footsteps of some of the world’s most acclaimed explorers such as Alexander the Great and Marco Polo.

The Silk Road Member States are in a unique position to leverage from each other by collaborating in a number of areas such as marketing, product development, tourism route development, travel facilitation and cross border initiatives. The Silk Road Action Plan 2012/2013 is designed as a platform to facilitate this, ultimately aiming to increase visitor length of stay and tourism yield across the regions. The Member States currently involved in the Silk Road Programme include: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, DPR Korea, Rep. Korea, Egypt, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
MISSION & GOALS

MISSION
The Silk Road Action Plan 2012/2013 will continue to focus on driving collaborative, sustainable tourism growth along the Silk Road. The strategies are built around one overarching mission:

‘The Silk Road Action Plan will work as a collaborative framework for marketing and capacity building, raising the profile of Silk Road tourism and driving development that is sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive.’

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES
The Silk Road Action plan comprises of strategies working towards the following objectives:

- **The Silk Road will be an internationally renowned, seamless travel experience**
  - The Silk Road will be an established brand, supported by extensive cooperative marketing campaigns
  - High quality infrastructure will facilitate smooth travel across international borders

- **The tourism sector will be prosperous across all Silk Road destinations, stimulating ongoing investment**
  - Governments will value and support the tourism sector and gain significant return for their investment
  - The Silk Road will offer high quality tourism infrastructure
  - Tourism will generate significant direct and indirect employment

- **Silk Road stakeholders will work closely together for mutual benefit**
  - Strong co-operation between Silk Road countries
  - Profitable partnerships between public and private sectors
  - Increased visitor length of stay and yield across all regions

- **Tourism will drive improved cultural and environmental management**
  - Advanced cultural management systems in place
  - Environmental sustainability will underpin every aspect of tourism development

- **Silk Road tourism will act as a vehicle for fostering peace and cultural understanding**
  - Promotion of cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue
  - Intercultural cooperation as a key instrument to strengthen social cohesion, solidarity and peace
FOCUS AREAS
Objectives outlined in the SR Action Plan 2012/2013 focus on three key areas of activity:

- **Marketing and promotion**
  - Coordinated marketing of a universal Silk Road brand identity and image
  - Develop a comprehensive Silk Road travel website
  - Promote good news stories and improve accessibility of information on destinations

- **Capacity building & destination management**
  - Implement capacity building programmes focused on destination management and heritage conservation in regional areas
  - Increase connectivity through tourism route development

- **Travel facilitation**
  - Increase cooperation between Member States to allow smoother travel across international borders
  - Work towards developing a Silk Road tourist visa
ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

The input, endorsement and support of stakeholders from across the Silk Road are essential in ensuring the success of the Silk Road Programme and during 2010/2011, UNWTO formed a Silk Road Task Force consisting of nominated representatives from National Tourism Organizations, UN agencies, and the private sector to have an active role in realizing the Action Plan’s objectives.
GOVERNING BODIES
While the Silk Road Action Plan relies on the active participation of all stakeholders, there are four key groups that are responsible for managing and implementing major activity:

World Tourism Organization
- Lead and drive the Silk Road Programme
- Provide a collaborative platform for building alliances
- Coordinate logistics of major events
- Communicate on progress
- Seek and manage donor funding/sponsorship

UN Agencies
- Provide expertise and endorsement of SR initiatives
- Galvanise support through networks
- Example institutions: UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, UNEP
- Promote the activities in the context of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

SR Task Force
- Determine key strategies and actions
- Endorse and drive implementation
- Encourage sharing and exchange of best practices
- Example bodies include: NTOs, private sector stakeholders, finance/investment

SR Member States
- Ensure representation and involvement in SR Task Force
- Actively participate in SR Ministers’ Summit
- Promote collaboration and cooperation amongst SR Member States in accordance with SR Programme Objectives
REVIEW AND PROGRESS 2011-2012

Within the pragmatic, collaborative approach undertaken since the first UNWTO Silk Road Action Plan 2010/2011, UNWTO, in cooperation with its Member States, partners and stakeholders, worked to achieve the following in 2011/2012:

- Established a Silk Road Task Force, ensuring all key stakeholders are represented and have input on the direction of the Programme. The second meeting was held in November 2012, supported by WTM London.
- Collaborated with sister UN agencies (UNESCO, UNEP, UNCTAD) to adopt a multi-faceted approach to planning and development also taking into consideration investment concerns.
- Brought together Ministers of Tourism along the Silk Road to discuss key issues at UNWTO Silk Road Ministers’ Meeting, supported by ITB Berlin in March 2012 and 2013.
- Established the Silk Road as a key feature at major international tourism fairs through implementing since 2010-2011 a comprehensive programme of trade and consumer seminars and promotional activities at WTM London, ITB Berlin and JATA Tokyo.
- Enhanced communication and promotion of the Silk Road through the UNWTO Silk Road Programme website (silkroad.unwto.org); social media presence (LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr and Vimeo); Silk Road promotional clip in partnership with the Buzz Business (UNWTO Affiliate Member); collaborating with Pilot Production for 2 special episodes on Silk Road for Globe Trekker’s 20th Anniversary ROUND THE WORLD marathon broadcast to 30 million viewers in 40 countries.
- Attracted new countries Bulgaria and Bangladesh, as well as new destinations and UNWTO Affiliate Members to join.
- Researched and consulted experts on developing a Silk Road marketing strategy, including a comprehensive analysis of 300,000 blogs, chatrooms and forums
- Investigated opportunities and approaches for developing a Silk Road sustainable travel website in cooperation with major travel websites and consultants
- Collaborated with over 170 graduating students of the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne, Switzerland for the development of a 5-10 years strategic plan for ten participating countries during the EHL/UNWTO Strategy Challenge
- Organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan an International Conference on Food, Culture and Tourism to highlight potential of the Silk Road region for food and intangible cultural tourism.
ACTION & IMPLEMENTATION

MAJOR EVENTS
UNWTO’s meetings, seminars, events and workshops will continue to focus on sharing ideas and best practices and fostering collaboration. In 2012/2013, UNWTO will continue working in partnership with major international tourism fairs to promote Silk Road tourism through its ongoing programme of consumer and trade activities.

MAJOR EVENTS 2013

UNWTO Silk Road FITUR Travelers’ Treasure hunt: Consumer Promotional Campaign
2 February 2013, FITUR, Madrid, Spain

UNWTO Silk Road Ministers’ Meeting
6 March 2013, ITB Berlin, Germany

UNWTO Tour Operators’ Forum on the Silk Road
7 March 2013, ITB Berlin, Germany

3rd Meeting of the UNWTO Silk Road Task Force
22-23 April 2013, Baku Azerbaijan

6th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism
1-3 August 2013, Dunhuang, Province of Gansu, China

Silk Road Programme’s activities at WTM London
4-7 November 2013, WTM London, UK
- Silk Road Speed Networking for Tour Operators in cooperation with WTM London (4 November 2013)
- Silk Road Social Media Event in cooperation with WTM London & its Social Media Market (6 November 2013)
### FOCUS AREA I: MARKETING & PROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>STEPS INVOLVED</th>
<th>WHO WILL BENEFIT</th>
<th>BUDGET REQUIRED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE SILK ROAD</strong></td>
<td>Create a global communications strategy for the Silk Road, including a brand toolkit with guidelines for use. Many destinations are currently using the Silk Road to promote their destinations, however without a universal communications strategy, their efforts are not reaching their full potential. With a professional and attractive brand toolkit supported by guidelines for use, brand recognition of the Silk Road will increase, stimulating higher interest and visitation to the destinations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Secure funding and establish budget</td>
<td>All stakeholders, particularly National Tourism Organizations (NTOs), Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), private sector stakeholders, civil society, consumers.</td>
<td>Silk Road competitive analysis (€35,000 approx.), Marketing and communications toolkit (€30,000 approx.), Capacity building workshops (depends on destinations)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Conduct Silk Road competitive analysis to determine potential strengths, weaknesses, values and characteristics of brand</td>
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<td>3. Using findings of research, develop a comprehensive brand toolkit with guidelines for use to ensure effective implementation and protection of the brand</td>
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<td>4. Conduct training workshops on how to implement communication strategies</td>
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<td><strong>THE SILK ROAD FEATURE ON GLOBETREKKER ‘ROUND THE WORLD’ SPECIAL 2012</strong></td>
<td>Showcase the Silk Road on ‘Globetrekker’ - the world’s most watched travel programme - as part of its 20th Anniversary Marathon special. In 2012, UNWTO will be working with Pilot Productions and UNWTO Member States to film a special 2 part episode feature on the Silk Road on ‘Globetrekker’. With an audience of 30 million viewers worldwide, it is anticipated that this program will generate huge publicity for the Silk Road globally.</td>
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<td>1. Commitment from involved Member States</td>
<td>Featured destinations and destinations along the Silk Road via promotion and increased consumer awareness of the Silk Road.</td>
<td>Ground logistics sponsored and coordinated by participating Member States, production costs covered by Pilot Productions, general coordination support from UNWTO.</td>
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<td>2. Scouting trip and shooting, coordinated by Globetrekker in partnership with Member States (May-July 2012)</td>
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<td>3. Broadcast and promotion, scheduled for airing October 2012</td>
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Projects Underway

**FOCUS AREA I: MARKETING & PROMOTION**

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<td><strong>SILK ROAD SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL WEBSITE</strong></td>
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<td>Develop a sustainable travel website for the Silk Road that will allow users to understand and explore the route’s key destinations and attractions. Currently there is no central portal for travel information on the Silk Road. The proposed website will:</td>
<td>1. Secure funding and establish budget</td>
<td>NTA, NTOs, DMOs, private sector i.e. tour operators, accommodation/transport providers, consumers,</td>
<td>Dependent on the depth of functionality and profile of the contractor, estimated cost between €150,000-400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide an important source of up-to-date information on all aspects of travel including routes, accommodation, transport, etc. with smartphones applications</td>
<td>2. Develop concept, functionality etc.</td>
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<td>• Promote responsible and sustainable travel</td>
<td>3. Review and select contractor/s</td>
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<td>• Highlight the diversity of the destinations of the Silk Road under one overarching brand</td>
<td>4. Develop website and upload content</td>
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<td>• Facilitate the booking of travel via direct links to booking agencies, tour operators etc.</td>
<td>5. Launch and promote via media campaigns</td>
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<td>• Provide real-time updates on border crossings, travel facilitation issues, etc.</td>
<td>6. Content continually updated and uploaded to keep website relevant</td>
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<td>• Encourage dispersal of visitation to regional areas and promote locally-based tourism initiatives</td>
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### Projects Underway

**FOCUS AREA 2: CAPACITY BUILDING & DESTINATION MANAGEMENT**

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<tr>
<th>REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES</th>
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| **Set up a framework for destination management in regional areas focusing on cross border initiatives that engage local communities and foster sustainable tourism development to increase visitation, generate employment and stimulate local economies.** The Silk Road boasts a plethora of cultural and natural attractions across its regions, yet supporting infrastructure is often modest and management systems limited. UNWTO is working on developing a platform for capacity building and regional development in cooperation with the Themis Foundation that would: • Contribute to the protection and promotion of heritage sites within Silk Road countries and drive sustainable tourism growth • Provide training for volunteers and host communities on heritage management • Stimulate awareness on the importance of protecting and preserving heritage sites • Maximise the joint expertise of UNWTO, UNWTO Themis Foundation and UNESCO through collaborative efforts and exchange of know-how. | 1. Identify the pilot destinations  
2. Conduct an exploratory mission and develop work plan  
3. Engage host community and international volunteers  
4. Implement workshops  
5. Conduct necessary fieldwork | Host communities, heritage management institutions, participating volunteers | Dependent on the nature and scope of initiatives and the needs of participating regions, estimated cost between €100,000-300,000 |
Projects Underway

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<td>1. Plan strategy outline for students</td>
<td>Participating Member States, all other Member States that will have access to the strategy models, EHL students</td>
<td>EHL: general coordination, UNWTO: supporting overall coordination with Member States and speakers, Member States: providing focal point and delegate for Silk Road Think Tank</td>
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<td>2. Engage Member States (10 in total) and nomination of key focal point</td>
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<td>3. Student research period (end April to end May)</td>
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<td>4. Presentations and Silk Road Think Tank (scheduled for 4 June 2012)</td>
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<td>5. Strategies promoted on UNWTO website and implemented in countries where applicable</td>
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<td>6. PR campaigns throughout</td>
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<td><strong>RAISING AWARENESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FACILITATING TRAVEL</strong></td>
<td>1. Establish case study/best practice portal on UNWTO Silk Road website</td>
<td>All stakeholders</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
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<td>2. Publish and promote all joint UNWTO initiatives on travel facilitation including UNWTO/WTTC report (to be launched May 2012)</td>
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<td>3. Continue talks with Ambassadors and Heads of State on the importance of travel facilitation in stimulating demand in tourism and contributing to economic growth and job creation</td>
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WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK!
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