Silk Road Action Plan
2016 / 2017
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The coming years presents an unprecedented opportunity to bring the countries and citizens of the world together to embark on a new path towards a more sustainable future.

On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit — officially come into force. Over the next fifteen years, these universal Goals should guide our collective action to end all forms of poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change.

Tourism, one of the most dynamic economic sectors, can contribute decisively to the achievement of the SDGs, namely Goals 8, 12 and 14, where tourism is specifically included.

With 2017 being declared by the United Nations as the ‘International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development’, we have an immense opportunity to advance the contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainability — economic, social and environmental, while raising awareness of the true dimensions of a sector that is often underestimated.

In this context, this fourth edition of the UNWTO Silk Road Action Plan builds on the achievements of the past and continues our work towards developing sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive tourism along this historic route. The Action Plan aims to combine the strengths and expertise of our Member States and private sector stakeholders and to set in motion pragmatic activities that will put the Silk Road on the global stage.

Today over 1 billion international tourists now travel the world every year. By 2030, UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to reach 1.8 billion.

Many countries along the Silk Road have advanced visa facilitation policies by implementing regional agreements, outsourcing visa processing, issuing visas on arrival and establishing e-visa systems. These measures are a very welcome contribution to increasing the ‘openness’ of the Silk Road and breaking down the barriers for travel. We must continue to share best practices, promote openness and work towards a ‘common visa’ for the Silk Road as this will surely translate in to significant socio-economic benefits.

Back in its heyday, the Silk Road was the world’s great supply chain. For almost two millennia, the Silk Road contributed to the common prosperity and development of humankind. Today, the Silk Road is an important vehicle for promoting intercultural dialogue, strengthening regional cohesion, solidarity and peace. By working together, we can build on our combined strengths and forge a bright future for all.

Taleb Rifai
Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
How to use this Action Plan

The Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017 is a comprehensive overview of UNWTO’s strategies and initiatives designed to help Silk Road tourism grow more robust, competitive and sustainable. The Action Plan aims to foster collaboration between stakeholders to stimulate investment and poverty reduction along the Silk Road, while safeguarding its cultural and environmental resources.

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 2016/2017 is designed as a platform to facilitate this.

The Action Plan begins with an introduction to Silk Road tourism and UNWTO’s vision for its development. It highlights the roles of the key stakeholders and provides an overview of Silk Road tourism activity led by UNWTO over the previous years. Global trends impacting tourism are also included to highlight the implications and opportunities for developing Silk Road tourism now and in the future.

The Action Plan outlines goals and objectives that have been developed based on the priorities set by Member States. The priority actions are designed to be realistic and achievable short term steps that work towards the ultimate vision for Silk Road tourism.

Success on the Silk Road will rely on dedicated input, engagement and support from all industry stakeholders. The UNWTO Silk Road Task Force will continue to play a key role in identifying priorities and measures that best represent industry needs. Stakeholders are encouraged to address the priority actions by working in collaboration at the local, national and regional levels. Member States are invited to align their national masterplans with the priority actions outlined in this Action Plan. All stakeholders are encouraged to take initiative and provide input on how these goals can be reached.

This Action Plan emphasizes the extensive opportunity for developing sustainable tourism along the Silk Road. Building on the increasing international recognition of the Silk Road as a vehicle for transnational growth and development, this Action Plan seeks to revive the historic routes as a tourism concept fitted to the globalized age we live in.
Introduction to 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 the West and was an important vehicle for trade between the ancient empires of China, Central and Western Asia, the Indian sub-continent and Rome. As routes of integration, exchange and dialogue, the Silk Road contributed greatly to the common prosperity and development of humankind for almost two millennia.

With its richly diverse cultural heritage and its wealth of natural tourism attractions spanning across thousands of kilometers of ancient routes, the Silk Road today offers visitors the opportunity to experience a unique network of destinations linked by a shared history. By venturing along the ancient Silk Road, tourists can walk in the footsteps of famed explorers such as Alexander the Great and Marco Polo.

UNESCO experts and state parties have dedicated years of research to identifying and analyzing the routes and corridors of the Silk Road. Through their findings, a vast array of ancient cities, caravanserais, mountain passes, forts and watchtowers, religious sites and archeological sites have come to light. While there is significant potential for tourism development and local economic growth along the Silk Road, many of the route’s cultural and natural sites are under threat, and significant investment and attention is required to ensure that they are safeguarded for the enjoyment of future generations.

The 33 Member States participating in the UNWTO Silk Road Programme include: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, DPR Korea, Rep. Korea, Egypt, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, San Marino, Spain, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (at time of printing, January 2016).
The Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017 works as a collaborative platform for marketing and capacity building, raising the profile of Silk Road tourism while driving development that is sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive. The Silk Road Action Plan works towards implementing the following multi-faceted vision:

**Vision**

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

**Key areas of work:**

- **Marketing & Promotion**
- **Capacity building & Destination Management**
- **Travel Facilitation**
Key Stakeholders

The input, endorsement and engagement from a variety of stakeholders are key to ensuring the success of the Silk Road Action Plan:

Four key stakeholder groups are responsible for managing and implementing the main activities outlined in the Silk Road Action Plan:

**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 input
- Galvanise support
- Promote the activities in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Example institutions: UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, FAO

**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 all meetings and events
- Promote collaboration and cooperation amongst SR Member States
UNWTO’s role in promoting the growth of Silk Road tourism dates back to 1994, when 19 countries called for the ‘peaceful and fruitful re-birth of these legendary routes as one of the world’s richest cultural tourism destinations’. Over the years, UNWTO worked closely with key UN agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to advance sustainable development imperatives across the regions of the Silk Road.

It was in 2010 that UNWTO developed a specialised programme dedicated to advancing tourism along the Silk Road. The first Silk Road Action Plan 2010/2011 was launched at the 5th International Meeting on the Silk Road in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, where the three key focus areas were established as:

a) Marketing and promotion
b) Capacity building and destination management
c) Travel facilitation

Marketing and Promoting the Silk Road

As a unique network of destinations linked by a common cultural heritage, the Silk Road presents significant opportunities for collaborative marketing and promotional initiatives. Over the years, UNWTO has collaborated with major international travel fairs on numerous promotional activities to highlight the tourism potential of the Silk Road. ITB Berlin is the established meeting place for Silk Road Ministers, as they convene annually to address key challenges and opportunities for cooperation. Social media activity continues to increase with Silk Road events being held on an annual basis at WTM London. Bloggers have competed to create innovative Silk Road blogs, and the winners have been sent across the Silk Road to promote its multiple attractions.

To raise the profile of the Silk Road on the international stage, UNWTO has invited major institutions to its meetings, such as UNESCO, World Bank, UNCTAD, ASEAN, ICOMOS, PATA and the Council of Europe. The aim of this multi sectorial approach is to tackle important issues and explore opportunities arising from global collaboration.

UNWTO has worked in collaboration with major production companies over the years, to produce a number of television documentary series promoting travel on the Silk Road. These have included:

- Two episodes featuring a Silk Road journey on Globe Trekker, a television series produced by Pioneer Productions. The series was first broadcast to 30 million people in 40 countries in 2012, and continues to be broadcast since. The episodes featured a journey across China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The episodes were presented by popular travel television personalities Holly Morris and Megan McCormick.
A four part series entitled ‘David Baddiel on the Silk Road’ with Pioneer Productions, to be aired on Discovery Channel Networks International during 2016. Discovery Networks International has a reach of 2.8 billion global subscribers in more than 220 countries and territories. The series follows a journey across 8 Silk Road countries: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, presented by one of the UK’s top comedians and writers Mr. David Baddiel.

Two documentary series with BBC4 on the Silk Road presented by the historian, writer and broadcaster Dr. Sam Willis, to be broadcast in 2016. The documentaries will feature 6 Silk Road countries: Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Turkey, Italy and China, with a special focus on the arts, heritage, culture and the daily lives of Silk Road artisans. BBC World operates in over 120 territories and their international channels attract over 152 million subscribers worldwide.

To address market intelligence gaps on the Silk Road, UNWTO partnered with a number of organizations on a research projects throughout 2015. The TripAdvisor Travel Trends Guide for the Silk Road 2015 was launched to provide insight into how consumers rate and research Silk Road countries on one of the world’s largest travel websites. The Uzbekistan Tourism Insight report was produced by UNWTO in cooperation with Uzbektourism and Monash University based on hundreds of surveys collected by tourism students in the country’s tourism hotspots. The results showed that 81% of tourists were attracted to Uzbekistan due to its historical connection with the Silk Road and 76% would recommend Uzbekistan to their friends. In addition, in 2015 UNWTO worked with BBC Advertising on an online consumer survey that was distributed to the BBC Global Minds and UNWTO Silk Road tour operator databases. Results showed that 88% of respondents had heard of the Silk Road, whilst 90% of the respondents rated the internet as their most important source of information for travel.

Capacity Building and Destination Management

Since the Silk Road Programme was launched in 2010, thousands of delegates have gained knowledge and expertise by participating in UNWTO Silk Road conferences and seminars. Topics have ranged from city tourism, urban development and destination marketing to heritage management, food tourism, investment, travel facilitation and product development.

UNWTO, in collaboration with UNESCO, has also run a series of capacity building workshops aimed at building closer collaboration between heritage and tourism stakeholders along the Silk Road. In 2013, following years of ground-breaking research by UNESCO, ICOMOS and University College London (UCL) on sites and routes of the Silk Road, the UNESCO/UNWTO Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy Project was launched as part of the transnational Silk Roads World Heritage Serial Nomination initiative.

With an unprecedented level of collaboration between 15 countries, two World Heritage Nominations for the Silk Roads Heritage Corridors in Central Asia and China have been submitted to UNESCO for inscription. Following extensive consultation with experts at a workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 2013, UNWTO and UNESCO launched a Roadmap for Development, a guideline document which sets out the objectives and steps for maximizing tourism development for the heritage corridors while safeguarding the Silk Road’s unique natural and cultural resources.

In what was a major milestone for the region, and a huge achievement for the State Parties involved, the Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor report on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China was the first Silk Road Heritage Corridor to be inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2014. The Chang’an-Tian-shan corridor was of enormous importance in the history of Central Asia, shaping the cultures, cities and customs of the regions along this route in China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It is hoped that the second Heritage Corridor crossing Uzbekistan and Tajikistan will be inscribed by 2017.

2015 marked the first specialised training programme on Enhancing Silk Road Interpretation and Quality Guides Training in Khiva, Uzbekistan, supported by the UNESCO Tashkent Office and the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Netherlands UNESCO Funds in Trust. Jointly organized by UNWTO, UNESCO and the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA), this pioneer ‘train the trainers’ course aimed at equipping guides with specialised skills and know-how on site-interpretation, presentation and management. Designed for the five countries participating in the UNESCO/UNWTO Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy project (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,
Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), the training course certified successful candidates as official WFTGA “Silk Road Heritage Guides”, helping to ensure quality interpretation on the sites and enabling them to train guides in their home countries. UNESCO, WFTGA and UNWTO also developed a specialised Silk Road Heritage Guides’ Handbook as a practical tool for improving the knowledge and standards of tourist guides.

In 2015, UNWTO commenced work with the Asia Development Bank on the Almaty-Bishkek Corridor Initiative (ABCI), a project aimed at identifying the possible scope for economic corridor development encompassing Almaty and Bishkek and the areas around and between them. The ABCI also represents a section of the Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor and a team of experts consisting of representatives from the Ministries of Economy, Agriculture, City Administrations, as tourism, education, disaster risk management, information technology and urban planning are carrying out the project.

In 2013, UNWTO also established a new partnership with the Council of Europe Venice Office, Veneto Region of Italy and Marco Polo Systems. The VeRoTour project, a pilot maritime tourism initiative along the Venetian routes of the Silk Road, aims to develop transnational thematic tourism products and enhance competitiveness and sustainability along the western link of the Silk Road.

UNWTO has also worked closely with educational institutions to engage young students and young professionals in Silk Road tourism initiatives. In 2012, UNWTO ran a very successful EHL/UNWTO Silk Road Strategy Challenge, where 200 final year students developed hospitality and marketing strategies for 10 Silk Road destinations. The students that developed the best strategy won a trip to the Altai region of Russia in 2013. The students worked with local tourism authorities, private sector stakeholders and students in developing a hospitality management strategy for the Altai region focused on health and wellness. The EHL graduates ran a series of interactive capacity building workshops involving over 200 local participants that attracted significant media coverage.

Facilitating Travel to connect the Silk Road

Travel facilitation has many facets, including: abolishing or liberalizing visas; improving border procedures; abolishing or minimizing taxation on travel; and air transport liberalization.

Visa policies are among the most important governmental formalities influencing international tourism. The development of visa policies and procedures, as well as other important travel documents, such as passports, is closely linked to the growth of tourism. UNWTO carried out extensive research on visa facilitation during 2012/2013 and commenced plans for a specialized report on the Silk Road launched at the 4th UNWTO Silk Road Ministers’ Meeting 2014.

Travel facilitation continues to be key topic in all UNWTO Silk Road meetings. Specialists and countries that have advanced in visa facilitation and air transport liberalization were able to share their best practices and positive results with Member States, thereby encouraging them to facilitate travel across the region. The UNWTO Secretary-General lobbied governments at the highest level during his discussions with heads of state to improve visa policies, while emphasizing the positive impacts in terms of economic growth and job creation.

UNWTO Silk Road Programme worked with UBM Routes, an Affiliate Member of UNWTO to boost air connectivity and promote open sky policies across the Silk Road. In 2014, UBM Routes launched its first ever Routes Silk Road event in Tbilisi, Georgia. Routes Silk Road brings together leading airports, airlines, tourism authorities, policymakers and aviation stakeholders to develop new air service to, from and within the Silk Road region. The Silk Road branding and promotion of this new aviation event was made in collaboration with UNWTO and the event was such a success that it was repeated in Tbilisi in 2015.

1. UNWTO, Uzbekistan Tourism Insight, 2015
2. BBC Advertising, Silk Road: A View to the World, BBC presentation delivered on 4 November 2015 at WTM London available on Silkroad.unwto.org

Image: Dunhuang, China. ID 23121869 © Xiye | Dreamstime.com
Looking Ahead: Global Trends Impacting Silk Road Tourism

While significant progress has been made since the launch of the first Action Plan in 2010, much work remains to be done to achieve the ultimate vision for Silk Road tourism. Looking ahead, there are a number of global trends that demonstrate the potential for tourism. Success will rely on the ability of stakeholders to maximise these opportunities.

- **International tourist arrivals are forecast to reach 1.8 billion by 2030** which means that 5 million people will be crossing international borders for leisure, business or other purposes every day.

- **Asia and the Pacific will be the fastest growing outbound region** in 2010-2030

- **Advances in technology**, such as increased internet accessibility and the expansion of smartphone usage and technology, will continue to impact tourism trends

- **Improved connectivity on the Silk Road** via new transnational rail links and air route expansion will change the way people travel across the regions

- **The rising affluence of Asia’s middle class** will create huge potential for tourism growth

- **Social media and user-generated content** are influencing consumers’ travel decisions like never before, creating herewith new opportunities and risks

- **Cruise tourism continues to grow**, with increasing demand from source markets Australia, Scandinavia, Finland, Germany and Brazil

- **Young travellers represent one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry** accounting for 20% of all international arrivals, generating an estimated 160 million visitors and a global market worth US$182 billion per year

- **Increasing demand for cultural tourism** is growing at an unprecedented rate, now accounting for around 40% of global tourism

- **Culinary tourism is an increasing motivation to travel** with tourists seeking local, authentic experiences linked intrinsically to the places they visit. Accounting for 30% or more of tourist expenditure, food plays an important role in the development of tourism services

- **Heightened consumer sensitivity to climate and sustainability issues** has increased the demand for responsible business practices and corporate social responsibility in tourism

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Image: Yak safari in Pamir Mountains, Tajikistan. © Alan Morton for Pamirs Eco Cultural Tourism Association (PECTA)
Focus Area 1: Marketing and Promotion

The importance of cohesive branding

In 2015, Forbes described the Silk Road as ‘one of the world’s most powerful brands, perhaps even bigger than Disney or Coca-Cola’¹. The Silk Road has a significant and strong foundation to build upon. UNWTO research has shown that the Silk Road is one of the world’s most discussed travel routes online. Destinations must take a collaborative approach to marketing and promote messages defined by a shared set of values. Consistent marketing messages are required to enhance the brand image of the Silk Road and improve the efficiency of all marketing and promotion efforts.

Priority Actions 2016/2017

• Engage with the industry and strengthen the Silk Road’s presence at major international fairs such as ITB Berlin and WTM London, while expanding activity into other regions

• Develop data, research and intelligence to create an effective Silk Road brand strategy, to enhance collaboration between Silk Road destinations and to increase consumer awareness

• Increase the online profile of Silk Road tourism, through an established destination website and/or industry marketing portal

• Develop marketing strategies in line with key source markets’ interests and expectations both at the individual destination level and collectively

• Enhance international Silk Road festivals and events

• Create new marketing opportunities through collaborating with other related international thematic routes such as the Maritime Silk Road, Spice Routes, Amber Routes, Great Tea Road, etc.


Image: Roof of the World Regatta © Murghab EcoTourism Association (META), Tajikistan www.meta.tj
Did you know?

The annual ‘Roof of the World’ Regatta, the highest altitude sailing event in the world, has been running on 380Km² Lake Karakul in the Eastern Pamir of Tajikistan since 2014. The event was conceived by the Murghab EcoTourism Association (META – www.meta.tj) to promote adventure tourism whilst supporting local economic and community development. Sailors from all five continents participate in a variety of activities including kite-boarding, windsurfing and sailing. On-shore activities are also organised to engage spectators such as volleyball, kiting, English lessons and children’s games.
Focus Area 2: Destination Management and Capacity Building

Working together to deliver consistently high quality products

Effective destination management maximizes tourism value and strengthens the national brand identity. By applying effective management strategies, destinations can foster economic growth, safeguard local arts and culture, diversify business and reduce visitor seasonality. Training and development has an important role to play in this. Training can enhance service delivery, improve product quality, boost productivity and increase profitability.

There needs to be a more consistent approach to destination management across the Silk Road. The route’s rich cultural heritage and the distribution of interrelated tourism sites make it ideal for cross-border initiatives and regional investment opportunities. Yet a number of challenges are currently impeding its growth and development. The level of product offer, service delivery, hospitality and language skills vary greatly across the route. Tourist information services are sporadic and interpretation is non-existent in some areas. Poor heritage management has also placed intangible and tangible heritage under threat. Community based tourism is yet to reach its full potential.

Priority Actions 2016/2017:

• Facilitate industry engagement for decision-making and strategy development through established forums, such as Silk Road Ministers’ Meetings and Task Force Meetings

• Promote the development of community based tourism in transnational initiatives such as the UNESCO/UNWTO Silk Road Heritage Corridors project

• Enhance industry training and development through online courses, manuals and workshops

• Implement capacity building programmes in regional areas focused on destination management and heritage conservation

• Develop product delivers quality experiences, excellent service and innovation

• Raise the profile of Silk Road tourism as an investment opportunity by collaborating with national investment agencies

• Improve interpretation at cultural and heritage sites, and through implementing tourist guide training programmes

• Enhance public private partnerships to create more opportunities for growth and sustainability

Image: Monastery of Saint Thaddeus, Urmia, Iran. Urmia will be the host city of the 6th UNWTO Silk Road Task Force Meeting in 2016. © Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
Did you know?

According to a BBC Advertising Asia survey of 1,274 people, 88% of people have heard of the Silk Road, and the top 10 countries most associated with the Silk Road in the 2015 survey were: China, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Mongolia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan.*

*Taken from the BBC Advertising Asia/UNWTO Online Survey 2015
Focus Area 3: Travel Facilitation

Overcoming the barriers to boost growth

While the Silk Road continues to be a hub for commerce and travel, barriers such as inefficient and outdated visa policies, border crossing procedures and customs regulations continue to hinder tourism growth in the region. There are extensive opportunities for enhancing connectivity by air, rail and sea along the Silk Road.

UNWTO is committed to working with its Member States to increase international arrivals, lengthen visitor stay and foster economic growth and job creation on the Silk Road by promoting a common approach to visas and connectivity.

Priority Actions 2016/2017:

• **Build on existing research** to raise awareness about the value of facilitating visas on the Silk Road with regards to international arrivals, economic growth and job creation

• **Continue to monitor visa policy improvements and showcase best practices** to encourage the modernization of visa procedures, reciprocity and the development of a ‘common visa’ for the Silk Road

• **Bring together visa policy decision makers and industry** to raise awareness about the value of facilitating travel

• **Increase connectivity between destinations and products** through developing Silk Road travel routes

• **Establish a set of guidelines for signage along the Silk Road routes** to develop signage that is welcoming, informative, consistent and attractive

• **Enhance connectivity and route development** through increased collaboration between airports, airlines and aviation ministries to make the Silk Road more accessible, and to promote trans boundary travel and dispersal of visitors

Image: Mercado Colon, Valencia, Spain. Spain officially joined the UNWTO Silk Road programme in 2015 and has declared 2016 the “Year of Silk” in Valencia, as part of Silk Road Strategy 2016-2020.
Did you know?

According to the TripAdvisor Travel Trends Guide for the Silk Road 2015, the top 10 highest rated Silk Road countries on TripAdvisor were: Armenia, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Croatia, Albania, and Azerbaijan.

The top 10 most researched Silk Road countries on TripAdvisor were: Italy, Spain, Japan, Greece, China, Turkey, Indonesia, Egypt, Russia and Croatia.*

Valencia (pictured) was voted one of the top 10 European ‘Destinations on the Rise’ in the TripAdvisor Travellers’ Choice Awards December 2015.

*Based on TripAdvisor data 2013 - May 2015