



## Executive Council

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### Implementation of the general programme of work for 2014-2015

#### I. Introduction

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1. This report presents a summary of the activities carried out by the Organization **from April to June 2015**, or so. It is the chronological continuation of document CE/100/3(d) presented in Rovinj, Croatia, in May and is structured along the Organization's two strategic objectives: (a) Competitiveness and Quality and (b) Sustainability and Ethics.

#### II. Competitiveness and Quality

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##### A. Sharing knowledge and experiences and building capacity

2. The *UNWTO.Themis International Training Course on Excellence in the Quality of Tourist Destinations* aimed to provide participants with knowledge, tools, skills and opportunities to discuss and implement the relevant issues of quality in the tourist destination (San Salvador de Jujuy, Argentina, 9-13 2015). More information [online](#).

3. Gastronomy and tourism are natural allies and mutually reinforce one another. The many links between gastronomy and tourism and the opportunities for closer cooperation between both areas were explored at the *1st UNWTO World Forum on Food Tourism*, jointly organized by UNWTO and the Basque Culinary Center (Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain, 27-28 April 2015). It provided a valuable platform to exchange experiences, enhancing the understanding of food tourism and how to successfully manage this growing tourism segment worldwide. More information [online](#).

4. Visa facilitation, open skies, the need to adapt to market needs and the role of events in the promotion of intra-regional tourism in the MENA region were the focus of the debate at the *2015 UNWTO & ATM Ministerial Forum on Intra-Arab Tourism: Addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities* organized back-to-back with the *40th Meeting of UNWTO Commission for the Middle East* (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 5 May 2015). More information [online](#).

5. Increased regional cooperation, visa facilitation and the customization of visitor experiences through mobile technologies were some of the topics in focus at the *58th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe* and *Seminar on Mobile Technologies for Improving the Tourism Experience* (Haifa, Israel, 12-13 May). More information [online](#).



6. The *UNWTO Course on Human Capital Development: a Factor for Quality Service* in collaboration with the George Washington University, examined key concepts, processes and practices in tourism human capital development, based upon lessons learned internationally and in the MENA region. (Doha, Qatar, 10-14 May 2015). More information [online](#).
7. During the *Regional Seminar on Multi-destination - an opportunity to stimulate tourism in the Americas*, held in the framework of the *58th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas*, UNWTO brought together experts and tourism stakeholders from the whole region to debate the challenges and opportunities in advancing multi-destination and regional tourism integration in the Americas (Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 19-22 May 2015). More information [online](#).
8. Aside from representing an important economic challenge in terms of the profitability of tourism companies and wealth generation in destinations, seasonality also has considerable environmental and socio-cultural impacts such as congestion management, use of natural resources, seasonable employment or social pressure. A **thematic discussion on “Innovation in Tourism: Finding New Ways to Overcome Seasonality”** took place on the occasion of the 100th session of the UNWTO Executive Council (Rovinj, Croatia, 27-29 May 2015).
9. The *UNWTO Regional Ministerial Conference on Positioning Tourism within a Wider Socio-economic context* examined to what extent the UNWTO/WTTC Open Letter initiative has achieved its goals and the linkages between tourism and other sectors of the national economy. The conference was held within the framework of the *27th CAP/CSA Joint Commission Meeting* (Bandos Island Resort, Maldives, 3-5 June 2015). More information [online](#)
10. In line with the Council's thematic discussion, the *3rd UNWTO Conference on Overcoming Seasonality* created a platform for its participants to collaborate on the analysis of an integrated approach to seasonality from the perspective of the public-private sector. (Torremolinos, Spain, 3-4 June 2015). More information [online](#).
11. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) together with the European Travel Commission (ETC) and with support from VisitFlanders, presented the key criteria that influence the choice of a destination by meeting planners at the International *Seminar on the Decision-Making Process of Meetings, Congresses, Conventions and Incentives Organisers* (Antwerp, Belgium, 11-12 June 2015). More information [online](#).
12. Reflecting on over 20 years' of work developing tourism on the Silk Road, the *7th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism* included the *1st Tourism Ministerial Meeting of Countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt* (Xi'an, China, 18-20 June 2015). More information [online](#).
13. The ability to offer a high-quality experience is a crucial element for tourism competitiveness in Mediterranean destinations. The *2nd UNWTO Conference on Destination Management in the Mediterranean* focused on enhancing the quality of the visitor's experience through strategic tourism partnerships (Budva, Montenegro, 22-24 June 2015). More information [online](#).
14. UNWTO supported the *5th Conference of the International Association for Tourism Economics*, organized by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Leeds Beckett University. The event provided an opportunity for researchers, scholars and practitioners to exchange ideas on key research issues in the field of tourism economics. More information [online](#).

## B. Data, research and guidance

### 15. *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer:*

(a) The *Volume 13, issue 2 – April 2015*, includes a comprehensive analysis of international tourism receipts in 2014, as well as the top destinations by international tourist arrivals and receipts, and top source markets by international tourism expenditure. It also offers an overview of air transport and hotel performance. Furthermore, preliminary results are included for international tourism in the first months of 2015. Excerpt available [online](#).

(b) The *Volume 13, issue 3 – July 2015*, includes an analysis of preliminary results for international tourism for the period January-April 2015 and an outlook for the May-August period, based on the UNWTO Panel of Experts. Excerpt available [online](#).

16. The *UNWTO Tourism Highlights – 2015 Edition* presents a concise overview of international tourism in the world based on the results for the year 2014. Available [online](#).

17. The *Snapshot analysis of markets performance and prospects in the Middle East and North Africa* provides real-time information and analysis on markets performance and short-term prospects in the MENA region, as well as recommendation of promotional measures. Available [online](#).

18. Highlighting strategic issues is determinant at a destination and organizational level in order to drive decision-making processes, implement policies, promote results-focused management and monitor progress. In this respect, and with the purpose of advancing knowledge for the sector, the *Repository of National Tourism Master and Marketing Plans* provides with the links of national master plans and marketing plans that are publicly available in online official national sources. The repository includes references to the publication year of the plans, the period when such plans are active, as well as their available languages. Available [online](#).

## III. Sustainability and Ethics

### A. Sharing knowledge and experiences and building capacity

19. The Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP STP) held the *second meeting of the Multistakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC)* on 30 April 2015 with the active participation of two-thirds of its members. The meeting resulted in the approval of the Operational Terms of Reference (ToR) of the 10YFP STP, which details the roles and responsibilities of all 10YFP STP Stakeholders (i.e. Lead, Co-Lead, MAC and Partners) as well as the programme's operating mechanism and operating principles. The ToR provide a solid basis to commence the implementation of the programme of work which focuses on 4 main areas: 1) Integrating sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns in tourism related policies and frameworks; 2) Collaboration among stakeholders for the improvement of the tourism sector's SCP performance; 3) Fostering the application of guidelines, tools and solutions to improve, mitigate and prevent tourism impacts and to mainstream SCP patterns among tourism stakeholders; 4) Enhancing sustainable tourism investment and financing.

20. Likewise, UNWTO continued the expansion of the Sustainable Tourism Observatories, as a means to measure, assess and manage tourism's impact at the local level, through an updated guidance document for their operation and management (see **Annex**), by renaming the Global

Observatories on Sustainable Tourism (GOST) as the *International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO)* and by accepting new observatories.

21. Since 2006, the UNWTO has convened the *Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy*. Funded by the Republic of Korea, this high-level executive training programme provides a platform for policy makers to get together for exchanging ideas on current tourism issues. This 9th edition dealt with Community Based Development and Tourism Recovery (Bohol, Philippines, 28 April - 1 May 2015). More information [online](#).

22. The transformation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international convention was the main focus of the *15th meeting of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics* (Rovinj, Croatia, 26-27 May 2015). Alongside this issue, the WCTE looked into the level of implementation of the Code by the public and private sectors as well as at the advances on its priority areas: the fight against child exploitation, accessibility, all-inclusive holidays and its impact on local communities, and the issue of unfounded ratings in web portals. See Report of the WCTE (A/21/10).

23. The *International Conference on Religious Tourism: Fostering sustainable socio-economic development in host communities* provided a forum to exchange views, perspectives and experiences on how to develop and promote religious tourism as a tool for inclusive socio-economic development focusing on partnerships and initiatives that warrant the engagement and empowerment of local communities (Bethlehem, Palestine, 15-16 June 2015). More information [online](#).

24. Around two-thirds of global carbon emissions come from energy use. The tourism sector, as a provider of services, is an important energy consumer and over 20% of its carbon emissions come from accommodation. There are huge opportunities for the hotel industry to reduce its energy consumption. In this perspective, the *Nearly Zero Energy Hotels 2015 Conference: Sustainable and Competitive Hotels through Energy Innovation* offer a unique forum to actively exchange, share and challenge the opportunities of energy innovation through nearly zero energy strategies, as a means to enhance sustainability and competitiveness in the hotel sector (Acropolis, Nice, France, 24 June 2015). More information [online](#).

25. In relation to resource mobilization activities, the Executive Council created in 2013 a Working Group on ODA (Official Development Assistance), chaired by South Africa. During its 100th session, the Executive Council endorsed the proposal of the WG-ODA to create the "Tourism for Development Facility" in order to strengthen the efforts of the Secretariat to mobilize ODA resources.

## B. Data, research and guidance

26. *Report on the First UNWTO International Conference on Spiritual Tourism for Sustainable Development* that took place in Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam, November 2013. More information [online](#).

27. *Report on the I International Congress Religious heritage and tourism: types, trends and challenges - Elche, Spain, 26–28 November 2014*: Gathering various stakeholders in the tourism sector, the academia and international organizations, the conference resulted in the adoption of the Elche Declaration, which highlights the contribution of religious heritage to sustainable tourism along its social, economic and cultural dimensions. More information [online](#).

28. *Manual on Accessible Tourism for All: Principles, Tools and Best Practices (co-produced with the ONCE Foundation and ENAT)*:

(a) **Module III: Main areas of intervention.** This module highlights the necessary actions that need to be undertaken in order to make the universal accessibility in tourism a reality. These actions should result from an overall policy framework and specific strategies fostering Accessible Tourism which are being discussed in this module. More information [online](#) (Spanish only).

(b) **Module IV: Indicators for the assessment of accessibility in tourism.** This module proposes a series of indicators developed for tourism destinations to assess, control, and manage their accessible tourism offer. Accompanied by a detailed methodology for their application, these indicators can serve as a practical tool not only to assess the current situation within destinations but also to consider further actions that may be required. More information [online](#) (Spanish only).

#### IV. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

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29. The Executive Council is invited:

- (a) To take due note of all the activities implemented during the period of reference;
- (b) To take note of the Provisional Rules for the Operation and Management of Observatories<sup>1</sup>;
- (c) To welcome the progress achieved in the establishment of Observatories on Sustainable Tourism and invite governments and other stakeholders to join the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO); and
- (d) To thank the Chair, South Africa, and the members of the Working Group on ODA for their valuable contributions.

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<sup>1</sup> As contained in Annex, entitled Observatory on Sustainable Tourism under the auspices of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Provisional Rules for the Operation and Management of Observatories

**Annex: Observatory on Sustainable Tourism under the auspices of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): Provisional Rules for the Operation and Management of Observatories**

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## **I. Introduction**

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1. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has been promoting the use of sustainable tourism indicators since the early 1990s as essential instruments for policymaking, planning and management processes at destinations. The present document aims to inform the Executive Council about the progress achieved in the establishment of Observatories (Part II), including an updated framework for the operation and management of a network of Observatories (Part III).

## **II. Observatories on Sustainable Tourism: Background & History**

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2. The International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO), previously referred to as the Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism (GOST)<sup>2</sup>, is an initiative addressed to policy makers, planners and tourism managers in order to strengthen institutional capacities for information management and monitoring in support of decision and policy making. The initiative intends to facilitate the establishment of a network of Observatories, through the systematic application of monitoring, evaluation and information management techniques, as key tools for the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies, strategies, plans and management processes.

3. Since 2004, various Observatories have been established in China, in Greece, in the Danube region as well as in Mexico. They were set up collectively with local stakeholders as sustainable tourism monitoring systems.

4. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012 (Rio+20) highlighted for the first time the importance of obtaining more reliable, relevant and timely data in areas related to the three dimensions of sustainable development and acknowledged the potential of tourism to make a significant contribution in this regard. The tourism sector is also committed to providing more evidence-based information in order to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also an outcome of Rio+20.

5. More recently at the sixty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014, resolution A/RES/69/233 entitled "Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection" was adopted and endorsed by 107 Member States. The resolution invited Governments and other stakeholders to join INSTO in order to support better informed sustainable policy around the world, placing sustainable tourism firmly on the UN post-2015 development agenda.

6. Recently, the UNWTO Secretariat received several requests from established Observatories to join the network. The principles of the present document allow now also for those already established Observatories to join INSTO.

7. The expected impact of INSTO initiative is to generate reliable evidence-based data on sustainability, which can increase destination resilience by identifying early warning signs relative to

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<sup>2</sup> As a result of feedback from international discussions with Observatories and in order to facilitate cross-cultural reference, the name is henceforth changed from GOST to The International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO).

risks to the sector and its destinations, document and warn of the impact of unsustainable practices and assist the sector to learn from incidences of good or poor practice.

### III. The International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO), Proposed Baseline Issues for Monitoring, Reporting and Information Sharing

8. At the ninety-fifth session of the UNWTO Executive Council held in 2013, the Report of the UNWTO Secretary-General (CE/95/3(III)(b) Add.) on the implementation of the general programme of work, section three (III) of the addendum, "Setting up Observatories of Sustainable Tourism under the auspices of UNWTO" outlined the steps to establish an Observatory of Sustainable Tourism. Based on the experience outlined in the above-mentioned addendum and subsequent activities<sup>3</sup>, the following additional actions are identified in order to set-up, operationalise and manage INSTO:

#### **Baseline Issues for Monitoring**

(a) **As from the time of application**, all Observatories shall provide UNWTO with a precise geographic definition of the monitored destination and its overall population size to indicate the scope of the area.

(b) **Each member Observatory shall monitor** at least a standard set of baseline issues.<sup>4</sup> Based on the over 40 issue areas published in UNWTO's '*Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook*'<sup>5</sup>, which are closely in line with the key issues defined by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), the following nine baseline issues have been identified as "mandatory" issue areas to be monitored:

1. Local satisfaction with tourism
2. Destination economic benefits
3. Employment
4. Tourism seasonality
5. Energy management
6. Water management
7. Sewage treatment
8. Solid waste management
9. Development control

Besides covering the above-mentioned nine baseline issues, Observatories may monitor further issue areas which are most relevant for their destination<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Including the discussion paper *Global Observatories of Sustainable Tourism: Programme Operations and Management*, 2014 that was presented and discussed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories in China.

<sup>4</sup> General reporting and data collection shall comply with the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008, as approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission. United Nations (2010), *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008*, UN, New York, available: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/seriesm\\_83rev1e.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/seriesm_83rev1e.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> World Tourism Organization, (2004), *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destination: A Guidebook*, UNWTO, Madrid.

<sup>6</sup> For sub-national measurements refer to the UNWTO-INRoute Initiative (2013) 'A Closer Look at Tourism: Sub-national Measurement and Analysis – Towards a Set of UNWTO Guidelines', available online at: [http://dtxtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/towards\\_set\\_unwto\\_guidelines.pdf](http://dtxtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/towards_set_unwto_guidelines.pdf)

## Reporting

(c) **After joining the Network, each Observatory will have** a two year period to meet the requirements of reporting on all the mandatory issue areas (as listed in clause b.) In the first year, new Observatories are expected to report on as many of the nine core issues areas as possible.

(d) **An annual report** on the baseline issues and monitoring results shall be provided in English to UNWTO by each Observatory. It shall cover the calendar year and not exceed 15 pages. If there is a Regional Coordinator (RC), Observatories in that region will provide their annual reports to them, so it can be aggregated into one report for the UNWTO Secretariat.

(e) **Observatories that provide** the UNWTO insufficient annual reports or do not submit annual reports for two consecutive years will be considered inactive. Their Observatory status will consequently be revoked. Prior written notice will be given to an Observatory after they fail to submit an annual report.

(f) **In each of the UNWTO regions**, with five or more Observatories, unless other agreements are in place, an Observatory or other Institution shall be chosen by the observatories in the region to be the Regional Coordinator (RC) that reports for all Observatories in the region to UNWTO. The term of the RC shall last two years and can be renewed, unless other agreements are in place. The functions of the RC include the following:

1. **Ensure regular reporting.**
2. **Analyse results and reports collected from the other Observatories in the region**, with the aim of sharing lessons identified and learned with all regional Observatories.
3. **Prepare and submit an annual regional report**, in English, to the UNWTO Secretariat, including the findings from all Observatories in the region.
4. **Advise the UNWTO Secretariat when an Observatory in the region has not complied with clause e. above, on the submission of annual reports, as agreed.**
5. **Convene an annual regional meeting** to share experiences, early warnings, new emerging trends, challenges, and other relevant issues as well as to identify national/regional information needs.

(g) **An annual international INSTO Conference** will be held, within the framework of one of the Annual Regional INSTO Meetings (as per clause 5, above), on a rotational basis regionally, where experiences are exchanged and issues related to monitoring, standards for data collection and analysis, trends, emerging warning signals and best practices (studies and methods) are discussed amongst Observatories members of INSTO.

(h) **Observatories are encouraged** to participate in other regional and international meetings of Tourism Observatories, outside of the UNWTO INSTO Conference, although they are not obliged to do so, to further strengthen the economic development across tourism and to share results obtained.

## Information sharing

(i) **Each Observatory will collect** and document success stories and examples of best practices. They can disseminate these stories nationally, regionally and to UNWTO in order to highlight success in the sector and to foster replication.

(j) **Each Observatory shall share** monitoring results with Observatories, the RC, if existent, and with other destinations as well as upwards to national/regional and international levels of government, where applicable, to serve decision-makers' needs at different levels supporting planning and management as well as responses to global issues.

(k) **UNWTO will support the sharing of information** among destinations and Member States and will support high level interventions where applicable by providing available aggregated information, national satellite accounts and documentation of success stories from Observatories to support sustainable tourism development.

#### IV. Approval Mechanism for New Member Observatories of INSTO

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9. All Observatories should be committed to the long-term monitoring of issue areas through indicators and other measurement techniques to enhance the sustainability of tourism in destinations.

10. Key operational factors for the acceptance of an Observatory as a new member of INSTO include the following:

- i. Agreement to monitor a selected set of mandatory baseline issues (see clause b.).
- ii. Agreement to commit to maintain the same indicators for monitoring the nine mandatory (and possible further) issue areas in order to ensure continuity and comparability over time.
- iii. Agreement to report monitoring findings on a regular schedule to UNWTO Secretariat and/or to the RC, if available.
- iv. Agreement to produce and share success stories with UNWTO Secretariat.

11. The procedure for the admission of a new or existing Observatory that would like to become a member of INSTO is as follows:

- v. Submission of the Observatory **Membership Application** Form, including the acceptance of the Statutes of UNWTO and the commitment to the principles of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.
- vi. Completion and submission of a **Destination Profile**, providing basic data about the destination so that UNWTO can gain a better understanding of its characteristics.
- vii. Submission of a **Preliminary Study/Report** not older than 12 months of the date of application, which can demonstrate how the Observatory is currently monitoring or propose to monitor sustainable tourism issues. The report or study should include key sustainability issues for the destination, current monitoring processes, data availability, sources, gaps and needs as well as recommendations for the structure of the Observatory.
- viii. Request '**Letter(s) of Support**' from relevant stakeholders such as e.g. the national tourism authority/ies where the Observatory is to be established. In case of cross-border destinations, the letter shall be signed by all the relevant authorities involved. The letter must be written on official stationary bearing the letterhead and seal of the governmental authority, and be sent directly to the UNWTO Secretariat to the above-mentioned address.
- ix. Send these four above documents (templates are available, as applicable) to the UNWTO Secretariat via mail, fax, or electronic mail preferably in MS Word.

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- x. Conduct, where applicable, a **Stakeholders' Workshop** to validate the findings of the preliminary study/report, to discuss issue areas and indicators that the Observatory shall monitor and to agree on the implementation plan for the Observatory.<sup>7</sup>
- xi. Upon receipt and positive assessment by UNWTO of all submitted documents, the Observatory will be officially accepted as a new member of INSTO. **A Letter of Acceptance** will be sent to the Observatory, confirming the approval of the application as well as the supporting documents and granting observatory status, which implies the immediate recognition and coming into force, as per the date of transmission of this official communication, of all the rights and obligations of an INSTO member.

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<sup>7</sup> Already existing Observatories may not be required to conduct this Stakeholders' Workshop.