

## **UNWTO Commission for the Middle East**

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### **4. Implementation of the general programme of work for 2018-2019**

#### **2. Update on Affiliate Member activities**

##### **I. Introduction**

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1. The purpose of this report is to present an analysis of the current situation and the initiatives carried out by the Affiliate Members Department since the presentation of the last report during the 109th session of UNWTO Executive Council in Manama, Bahrain - , up to the date of the present report.
2. The various initiatives in the Programme of Work are being carried out with active engagement of Affiliate Members, utilizing a variety of tools in coordination with other UNWTO Departments to enhance public-private collaboration by encouraging interaction and networking, as well as the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

##### **II. Affiliate Members Department: Enhancing public-private partnerships**

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3. The Affiliate Members department is working on driving changes in the tourism private sector, not through short-term actions, but through long-term impact by generating knowledge, empowering stakeholders and inspiring action in the tourism sector to fully embrace sustainable development. Against this background, since the previous report, a series of actions based on the work areas detailed in the Programme of Work, approved by the Board of the Affiliate Members, have been carried out. These actions are the following:

###### **(a) Events**

- i. **Organization of the 4th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism**, in Thailand (May 2018). It focused on harnessing the power of technology as a driver for sustainable growth. It presented an excellent opportunity for leading experts in gastronomy tourism to discuss current trends and challenges in the sector, exchange best practices and inspire discussion on intercultural dialogue, gastro diplomacy, and the importance of technology for sustainable gastronomy tourism. Like previous editions of the UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, this forum explored gastronomy as the essence of culture and an element of intangible heritage and the interrelation between gastronomy and tourism that can enhance sustainable local development.



- ii. **Organization of the 7th Meeting of the Gastronomy Network** which took place within the framework of the 4th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism in Thailand (May 2018). Aiming to further strengthen collaboration between UNWTO and other representative organizations in the field of gastronomy, establish new networking opportunities and discuss developments since the last meeting.
- iii. **Organization of the 3rd UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism** in the Republic of Moldova in September 2018. The conference brought together international participants ranging from public entities, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), international and intergovernmental organizations as well as private sector stakeholders. Throughout the sessions, dynamic discussions and expert presentations advanced in topics such as overcoming challenges in wine tourism, Public-Private Partnerships for rural wine development and inclusive tourism practices. Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this conference sought to explore issues related to sustainable rural development through tourism and, especially, engaged in advancing the pivotal role wine tourism can play in fostering local development.
- iv. **Organization of the Conference on City Breaks: Creating Innovative Tourism Experiences** in Valladolid, Spain in October 2018. The conference served as a platform to exchange experiences and perspectives on the potential as well as challenges of city breaks as leisure experiences for travellers that are both diverse and immediate. It explored the diverse and innovative segments cities can bring together, with special emphasis on technology, governance and public-private collaboration models that allow for their proper implementation.
- v. **Organization of the 40th UNWTO Affiliate Members Plenary Session: International Seminar on Harnessing Cultural Tourism through Innovation and Technology** in Hamadan, Iran in November 2018. Within the framework of the Plenary session, while discussing the annual programme of work and establishing partnerships and joint initiatives around new and existing areas of work, the seminar aimed to recognize the opportunities of integrating innovative governance into the management of cultural tourism destinations; build public-private partnerships to develop synergy and boost cooperation among involved stakeholders towards advancing and implementing innovative cultural tourism practices and deploying appropriate technologies.
- vi. **Organization of the 48th Meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members** at ITB Berlin 2019. The Members of the Board discussed the details of the Programme of Work and the Restructuring plan. The discussions aimed at boosting the benefits for the UNWTO Affiliate Members while empowering the private sector and enhancing its contribution to the sustainable development of tourism worldwide.
- vii. **Launch of the Music Tourism Network at ITB Berlin 2019.** The Music Tourism Network has been created by the Affiliate Members Department in collaboration with ProColombia- Affiliate Member, as a way to harness the potential of music tourism and create a platform for music destinations to share best practices and exchange knowledge.

**(b) Publications**

The Affiliate Members Department has published the following report:

- (i) **UNWTO Global Report on Inclusive Tourism in collaboration with Globaldit:** This publication will provide a comprehensive compilation of real-life examples showcasing the power of tourism as a powerful tool for the inclusive development of tourism destinations.

**(c) UNWTO Networks and UNWTO Working Groups**

The Affiliate Members Department has launched UNWTO Networks and UNWTO Working Groups to group Affiliate Members together by areas of interest.

- (i) UNWTO Networks serve as a venue for active collaboration among UNWTO Members to address pressing tourism-related issues of common interest. Thus far, there are four established UNWTO Networks: Gastronomy Network, Shopping Tourism Network, City Tourism Network, Music Network, and Wine Tourism Network.
- (ii) In addition to Networks, UNWTO also supports working groups which serve as a crucial starting point for knowledge exchange and generation between Affiliate Members and Member States, from which further initiatives can be developed. Working groups have been established on the following topics: Accessible Tourism, Resilience in Destinations at Stake and SDGs Support Working Group, Youth Tourism and Technology in Tourism. The meetings are scheduled on the regular basis and discussions are led towards joint practical measures and activities serving tourism stakeholders.

**4. Affiliate Members Department: Empowering private sector and all tourism stakeholder**

Bringing together over 500 companies, educational and research institutions, destinations and NGOs, the Affiliate Members Department provides a space for members to engage in dialogue, share information and take further action. Its principal mission is to foster synergies among Affiliate Members and Member States and to promote the exchange of knowledge among key stakeholders with the objective of contributing to the promotion of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to the abovementioned, the Affiliate Members Department has developed the following tools and benefits available to its members:

**✓ Interactive Platform**

The Affiliate Members Department offers an interactive platform for members to communicate and encourages collaboration and is exclusively available to Affiliate Members.

**✓ Partnerships with private stakeholders**

The UNWTO Affiliate Members Department serves as the major gateway for alliances and collaboration with the private sector in tourism. Taking into account the mission of UNWTO to encourage the tourism stakeholders to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts, the Affiliate Members Department endeavors to have more Affiliate Members and engage them in UNWTO's values, standards and activities. The more involvement of the private sector and other players can enhance the

sustainable and responsible tourism. Different areas of cooperation and activities can be envisaged based on the expertise and interest of Affiliate Members.

✓ **Publications and Reports**

The Affiliate Members publications, jointly produced with interested Affiliate Members, address topics of interest from the perspective of public-private partnerships to support the advancement of knowledge in tourism. Based on a compilation of Affiliate Members case studies and real-life examples, they can serve as models for many destinations and companies. The principal objective is to serve as inspiration and equally a guide for destinations and the full list of publications is available here: <http://affiliatemembers.unwto.org/publications>.

✓ **AM Newsletter and SDGs Newsletter**

The AM Newsletter is a service that enables members to share their initiatives and projects with the entire AM community, establish contacts with prospective business partners and promote their services to other members.

✓ **Candidatures from the Middle East**

At the time of preparation of this document, the following institutions and companies from Saudi Arabia had communicated to the Secretariat their intention of becoming Affiliate Members of the Organization:

- Al-Hukeir Institute for Tourism and Hospitality
- The Red Sea Development Company
- The Royal Commission for Al Ula

**Annex: General situation of the Affiliate Members**

- (a) The number of Affiliate Members is currently 523.
- (b) The total geographic distribution of the Affiliate Members is as follows:
  - (i) Africa: 28
  - (ii) Americas: 110
  - (iii) Asia-Pacific: 67
  - (iv) Europe: 300
  - (v) Middle East: 14
- (c) The Affiliate Members represent the following areas:
  - (i) University and Research Programs: 138
  - (ii) Professional Associations: 59
  - (iii) National, Regional, Local, City Promotion Boards: 71
  - (iv) Tourism Business Management & Consultancy: 57
  - (v) Destination Management Organizations: 34
  - (vi) Hotels / Accommodation: 22
  - (vii) Trade Fairs & Exhibition Management: 28
  - (viii) Travel Agencies & Tour Operators: 43
  - (ix) Air, Rail & Road Transport: 16
  - (x) Research Social, Economic and Cultural Impacts of Tourism: 19
  - (xi) Mass Media: 11
  - (xii) Other activities: 25
- (d) New Membership: The Affiliate Members Programme has received 21 complete applications which will be referred to the next 110th session of the UNWTO Executive Council for approval.