



TECHNICAL NOTE

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

Background: About the UNWTO Silk Road Programme

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 the ancient empires of China, India, Persia and 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 and technology. With its richly diverse cultural heritage and its wealth of natural tourism attractions spanning across 12,000 kilometers of ancient routes, the modern -day Silk Road 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.

UNWTO has been supporting the development of sustainable tourism along the Silk Road for many years. In 2010, UNWTO entered a new phase of the Programme by launching the *Silk Road Action Plan*, a collaborative framework for marketing and capacity building. The objectives and initiatives outlined in the Action Plan are designed to raise the profile of Silk Road tourism and drive development that is sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive.

The 29 participating countries are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, 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.

The Silk Road Programme focuses its activity on three key areas, working towards the following objectives:

i) Marketing and Promotion

- The Silk Road will be an established brand, supported by extensive cooperative marketing campaigns
- The Silk Road will stimulate cooperative campaigns and partnerships between public and private sectors
- Silk Road tourism will act as a vehicle for fostering peace and cultural understanding

ii) Destination Management

- Governments will value and support the tourism sector and gain significant return for their investment
- Tourism will drive improved cultural and environmental management
- Tourism will generate significant direct and indirect employment
- Silk Road stakeholders will work closely together for mutual benefit

iii) Travel Facilitation

- The Silk Road will be an internationally renowned, seamless travel experience
- Member States will work together to address border and visa issues
- High quality infrastructure will facilitate smooth travel across international borders

Objectives of the 6th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism

The 6th International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism will bring together experts in the fields of tourism, marketing, investment and heritage management to discuss how to raise the profile of Silk Road tourism and drive development that is sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive. The Meeting will look at how stakeholders can leverage from the Silk Road's positioning and help rebuild the world's most important travel route.

Topics will include:

- World tourism trends and outlook for the Silk Road region
- Creating a stronger environment for business growth and investment
- The important role of Silk Road cities
- Developing and enhancing Silk Road product
- Facilitating travel to strengthen the Silk Road's extensive network of destinations
- Addressing environmental concerns and safeguarding heritage

Gansu and the Silk Road

The region of Gansu, located in China's northwest, once formed a corridor through which many foreign ideas and artifacts entered China and were transmitted to the metropolitan centers farther east. With impassable mountains to the south and inhospitable desert to the north, Gansu was for centuries the vital corridor between China and Central Asia, comprising around 1600-kilometres of the Silk Road.

Gansu today boasts many ancient monuments along the Silk Road including temples, monasteries, pagodas, towers and ancient palaces. The architecture, crops and attractions of Gansu still have the influence of the people who settled and passed by during the time of the ancient Silk Road.

The Silk Road has been listed as the number 1 route of the top 12 routes in China by China National Tourism Administration. With its rich cultural and natural attractions, Gansu is rapidly establishing itself as one of the world's top Silk Road destinations.