OUTCOME DOCUMENT

The *1st UNWTO World Conference on Smart Destinations* was held on 15-17 February 2017 in Murcia, Spain. It gathered partners from the public and private sectors to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the tourism sector, and destinations in particular, arising from the development, implementation and management of innovative products and services that are based on new technological solutions. The following is an overview of the main points discussed during the event.

1. Current sectorial changes and characteristics of smart destinations

1.1 As the tourism community celebrates the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, and is working towards realising the potential of the sector as an agent of change that contributes responsibly to the 2030 Development Agenda, the role of smart tourism destinations in helping achieve these goals will undoubtedly increase not gradually, but exponentially, with the involvement of technology.

1.2 Similar to other sectors, tourism stakeholders are increasingly confronted with the need for more timely and regular information that provides essential evidence of the actual performance and impact of the sector. In view of the ongoing growth of tourism worldwide, the sector's changing nature and the need for decoupling its growth from increasing use of required resources, data monitoring and analysis is becoming an increasingly integrated part of all management processes, allowing for more effective decision-making.

1.3 A smart and intelligent destination continuously measures, integrates and analyses information collected for decision-making, prioritization of measures and anticipation of challenges. It is especially characterized by a continuous drive and support for innovation and technological developments that bolster resilient and sustainable development. This characterization comes from the effective use of new tools to regularly collect and analyse data, as well as the timely, wide and interactive distribution of its results. By comprehensively collecting and analysing data, smart destinations strengthen not only their economic growth, but also their environmental and socio-cultural performance.

1.4 In order to generate a sound understanding of tourism and its impacts on the destination, official statistics and non-traditional data have to complement each other. The permanent monitoring and analysis of key indicators designed for this purpose is therefore an essential element of smart destinations, which should allow for certain levels of comparability while ensuring that interpretations can be made in specific contexts.

1.5 Furthermore, smart destinations implement and increase the use of technology that connects different physical elements, services and spaces, and that facilitates the analysis of the resulting data. As this can improve the management of these elements in real time, among others, big data analysis, the Internet of Things (IoT), open data strategies are fundamental elements for transitioning to more intelligent tourist destinations.

2. Needs for a purpose-driven development of smart solutions

2.1 When developing smart destination systems, objectives, strategies and action plans shall aim at supporting the destination's sustainable development, reflecting different contextual elements such as available resources; residents' and visitors' needs; the destination's specific socio-cultural/environmental context; its current challenges and needs, etc. Because not all existing challenges can be overcome at once, prioritization is essential when implementing smart solutions.

2.2 For such purpose-driven development, and in order to create feasible action plans for the destinations, it is of high importance that efforts are made to create a detailed analysis, at the beginning of the planning process, which clearly identifies and reflects the local characteristics, the main challenges and needs, the prevailing regulatory framework, necessary interventions and other essential aspects. Throughout the process, data visualization is crucial for a transparent and understandable interaction with the host and guest.

2.3 Data availability, especially of geographically-referenced data, plays a key role in harvesting the full potential of technology, allowing businesses to create needed solutions in a timely manner. While increased availability can improve connection and integration of sources, regulatory frameworks that allow and foster such innovative processes are essential at the same time.

2.4 Crucial technical elements for developing intelligent destination systems include the combination of strong hardware and software systems, using sensors, satellite technology and other tools that facilitate the collection of vital information among other innovations; powerful data storage, management and analysis systems; and secured connectivity that allows and guarantees communication and interaction between different stakeholders and thus the competitiveness of the destination.

3. Catalytic partnerships and knowledge transfer

3.1 With tourism playing an important part in many urban or rural communities around the world, the successful planning of smart destinations depends very much on its integration within these environments. Consequently, meaningful partnerships between individual or specific groups of actors are key for the successful transition towards smart destinations, not only in respect to developing and implementing new solutions but also to ensuring continuity. This includes not only partnerships between and within the private and public sectors, between data providers and recipients, but also with other stakeholders such as the local communities and other non-tourism actors.

3.2 While it is essential for tourism stakeholders involved in creating smart destinations to form and be represented through inclusive entities, such as patronages, consortiums and foundations, it is of similarly high importance to seek close cooperation and connections to other local non-tourism stakeholders (e.g. urban planners, technology providers etc.) that are also aiming to create smart solutions for the destination in order to ensure scalability of solutions and their impacts.

3.3 Platforms that allow for the exchange of good practices at local, regional and global level will promote synergies within and across destinations and sectors and are therefore essential for impactful knowledge transfer, accelerating the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism sector and beyond.

4. Improving travel experiences and strengthening the role of entrepreneurs

4.1 Smart solutions enable destinations and companies to better respond to changing travel behaviours and needs of the more informed, hyper-connected and multi-channeled tourist by offering more relevant, integrated services (e.g. from door to door) and incorporating fast adaptation processes in individual business models as well as in destinations themselves.

4.2 The digital environment allows companies to promote destinations, products and services more successfully than ever, creating higher value through, for example, better market segmentation, personalization of products and services, and more transparent and immediate communication with customers. Therefore, destinations are more equipped to actively steer and respond to their visitors' needs, increasing their satisfaction and the overall competitiveness and quality of the destination.

4.3 As the tourism sector comprises large shares of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with limited resources for research and development, thus limiting the level of innovation where most needed, public policies are required to stimulate and fertilize progress in this area.

5. Strengthening a more holistic sustainable development of tourism

5.1 Smart solutions are only intelligent if they improve sustainability. While advances in data management have been made predominantly in the economic area of sustainability in the past, the new digital transformation of the sector offers opportunities to strengthen a more universal approach towards sustainability, supporting stakeholders at all levels to profit from decision making mechanisms based on tangible evidence in all three pillars of sustainability, allowing destinations to govern their tourism activity more effectively.

5.2 The collection and analysis of data to address issues related to the environmental and socio-cultural dimensions of tourism remains limited. However, smart solutions offer great opportunities to overcome current data gaps in this area. While there is specifically a need for more regular and timely information regarding the use of different resources (e.g. water, waste, energy), it is also important to foster smart solutions that integrate knowledge from different sources and drive circular design of products and services for higher resource productivity, strengthening the sustainable management of resources overall.

5.3 Because new technological solutions for smart destinations should be based on, and should preserve and promote, local identities and values, destinations' successful governance is highly dependent on continuous participatory processes involving all stakeholders, public and private, across all levels. In order to strengthen participatory policy-making, local governments shall therefore make increasing use of tools such as participatory budgets that ensure long-term participation of local communities.

5.4 Within the social dimension of sustainability, new technologies and smart systems shall be encouraged that serve to improve accessibility for people with different disabilities, ensuring that destinations and travellers' journeys are barrier-free and accessible for all, recalling the principles of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

Madrid, 24 February 2017