TECHNICAL NOTE

THE 15th UNWTO ASIA/PACIFIC EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME ON
TOURISM POLICY AND STRATEGY

Domestic Tourism
as the National and International Long-term Tourism Strategy

Tuesday 5 to Friday 8 October 2021
Male, The Maldives
(Hybrid)

World Tourism Organization
1. Background

Since 2006, the UNWTO has convened the Asia and the Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy annually. This Executive Training Programme is the only Programme of its kind in the region and is renowned for its stimulating content and thought-provoking discussions. The theme and subject of the Programme change each year and has historically had far-reaching impacts both for the host destination and the attendees.

The delegates who attend the Executive Training Programme are high-level officials within their respective governments across Asia and the Pacific region. Through a series of lectures, discussions, debates, and presentations, the Training Programme provides a platform for sharing knowledge and experience to learn successful practices in policy and strategy formulation and implementation. In addition, the Executive Training Programme allows participants to improve their strategic tourism skills and, through a newfound network of regional contacts, continue to develop these skills going forward.

Attending the Executive Training Programme is an excellent opportunity to learn about the most critical issues in the tourism sector and engage with other high-level officials from the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, participants can design and formulate policies and programmes in their respective destinations to stimulate tourism growth further and enable the sector to be a viable force for good.

2. Context

With travelers considering destinations closer to home in the early stages of travel normalization and with still necessary travel restrictions in place for international travel due to COVID-19, countries with higher shares of domestic tourism are likely to recover earlier and faster.

Destinations worldwide are focusing on growing domestic tourism, offering incentives to encourage people to explore their own countries. According to the UNWTO, in 2018, around 9 billion domestic tourism trips were made worldwide – six times the number of international tourist arrivals (1.4 billion in 2018).

Given the value of domestic tourism and current trends, it will help many destinations recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic while at the same time safeguarding jobs, protecting livelihoods and allowing the social benefits tourism also offers to return. In this regard, it is essential to analyze the domestic tourism market and provide policymakers with examples of initiatives implemented around the world to stimulate domestic travel and restore confidence.

Both the public and private sectors play a vital role in promoting domestic travel. The public sector most strongly influences infrastructure development, SME inclusion, education, and training, while the private sector, as a key element of local value chains, is an essential player to ensure authenticity and sustainability if the experience is memorable and recommended. One sector without the other will struggle to advocate sustainable development in domestic tourism.

On another note, innovation can help drive domestic tourism by creating new experiences and fostering networks. It is helpful to maximize innovation and technology to tap new markets and diversify products. Technology enhances the travel experience by providing customers with access to a wealth of information and knowledge before and during their journey.

3. Training Programme Objective
The theme for the 15th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme is **Domestic Tourism as the National and International Long-term Tourism Strategy**, which is a pressing topic for destinations across the globe.

The Programme is specifically designed to support tourism policymakers and managers. It aims to strengthen effective and responsive policies and strategies that must adapt to changing priorities and concerns at national and destination levels.

The overall objectives of the training programme are to deepen participants’ understanding of the effects of the spread of COVID-19 on Domestic Tourism and how to foster Domestic Tourism with a focus on the following areas:

- Potential of Domestic Tourism to help drive economic recovery in destinations;
- How tourism leaders can stimulate domestic demand and expand supply for services in accord with SDGs;
- What product development and commercialization challenges need to be prioritized to speed tourism development in rural areas;
- How to promote tourism policies, including innovative programs and initiatives;
- How public and private sectors can work together to harness domestic tourism to foster growth, development, and fair and decent job creation, particularly for women and young people;
- How public and private sectors can encourage people to explore their own countries and manage destinations in the era of the new normal;
- How tourism officials can use technology and big data to monitor impacts and promote destinations;
- How to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on domestic tourism and to drive the recovery

Moreover, the training program strives to enable UNWTO’s Asia and the Pacific Member States to share successful tourism practices on domestic tourism and the above-mentioned topics. The ultimate aim is to strengthen the capacity of destinations at the regional, sub-regional, national, and destination levels.

4. Executive Training Programme Overview

The 15th Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme will start on 5th October 2021 with the Opening ceremony and Forum on Domestic Tourism, which will be open to local participants to broaden the discussion.

There are four training sessions, and each session will focus on one of the following topics:

- Destination Management and Operations in the era of the New Normal (Session 1, Day 1);
- Engaging the Private Sector to Foster Domestic Tourism (Session 2, Day 2);
- Innovation and the Future of Domestic Tourism: Building Opportunity for Growth and Development (Session 3, Day 2);
- Restarting International Tourism beyond Domestic Tourism (Special Session, Day 3)
Session 1-3 will have a similar structure, with an opening speech (20 minutes), followed by Q&A. After that, country presentations (4-6 in each session, 10 minutes) address specificities and highlight the best practices on each topic. These country presentations will detail national policies, strategies, and programs to support domestic tourism. Later, discussions will be held for all delegates to share their country’s views and recommendations for policy on each topic.

In the Special Session, the government officials from Egypt, Fiji, Italy, Maldives, Spain, Thailand, and the Republic of Korea (TBC) will give a speech on “Restarting international tourism beyond Domestic Tourism”. The allocated time for each speaker will be about 15 minutes.

The last day of the event on 8th October will consist of a Technical Tour organized by the Ministry of Tourism of the Maldives. This tour and other social events are a fantastic opportunity for delegates to experience the culture and beauty of the Maldives and network with tourism leaders across Asia and the Pacific region.