



UNWTO Commission for the Middle East

Forty-Eighth Meeting
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4- UNWTO In the Middle East

1. Major Initiatives and Current Activities

The Organization's programme of activities in the region is built around the following five priorities, which are also part of the SDG's and in line with the priorities expressed by Members States and agreed upon during the last virtual meeting of the Executive Board of the Arab Council for Tourism Ministers of the League of Arab States, in December 2020:

1. Boost destinations competitiveness by promoting accessibility, and digital technology fueled innovation **SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 17**
2. Enlist key private sector players, promote PPPs, entrepreneurship and develop collaborative platforms **SDGs 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17**
3. Enhance decent jobs creation through institutional development and capacity building **SDGs 4, 8, 10 and 17**
4. Strengthen safety, security and resilience, facilitate travel, consolidate recovery and sustain growth through shocks **SDGs 3, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 16**
5. Protect cultural, social and environmental heritage and promote sustainable tourism policies **SDGs 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16**

The Middle East Region as of 1 November 2021

- **Lifting of all COVID-19 related travel restrictions:**

- from 46 destinations around the world, **2 destinations in the Middle East** applied complete closure of borders: Syria and Yemen (representing 15% of all destinations in the Middle East) (Syria clarified it was a Partial closure conditional on sanitary measures and is eased now).
- Among the 26 destinations with complete border closure **for at least 79 weeks: 1 destination in the Middle East:** Yemen.
- Among the 55 destinations that have **partially closed their borders** are: **6 destinations in the Middle East:** Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar and Saudi Arabia (46% of all destinations in the Middle East).
- Among the 112 destinations that have **negative COVID-19 testing requirement and/or quarantine** for tourism purposes in place, are: **5 destinations in the Middle East:** Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, United Arab Emirates (39% of all destinations in the Middle East).
- Among the **85 destinations** that **ease restrictions for fully COVID-19 vaccinated international tourists** are: **7 destinations in the Middle East:** Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (54% of all destinations in the Middle East).
- Among the **20 destinations** that **request mandatory full COVID- 19 vaccination of international tourists,** are: **3 destinations in the Middle East:** Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia.

Regional activities

The activities carried-out by UNWTO in the Middle East during the period 2021-2022, as well as those planned for the rest of 2022, in implementation of the Organization's general programme of work covering each of the strategic objectives listed above - were noticeably affected by the Covid-19 and alternatively the switch to organize online activities was remarkably achievable and successful - are summarized in the attached table.

	Activities	Dates	Status
A. <u>SG's official Visits</u>	1. Official visit to UAE, Ministerial Forum in the framework of EXPO, and UNWTO Tourism Tech Adventure, UAE	March 2022	Ongoing
B. Researches/ Reports	1. UNWTO Best tourism villages Initiative of the world	2021 -4Q	Completed 3 winning villages from Lebanon, Oman & Saudi Arabia
	2. The Regional Report on Women in Tourism for the Middle East.	2021 -Q2	Completed Translation of Arabic Version
	3. Gastronomy Brochure, Egypt	2021 Q2	Done

	Activities	Dates	Status
<u>C.</u> <u>Conferences,</u> <u>Workshops</u> <u>and Webinars</u>	1. Regional workshop on the International Code for the Protection of Tourists to foster its promotion and adherence within the regions, Online	May 2022	Online
	2. Global Youth Tourism Summit, Sorrento, Italy	27 June, 3 July	Ongoing, MS are encouraged to submit their nominations
	3. Regional Conference on Statistics, Manama, Bahrain.	Q3, Exact dates TBC	Ongoing discussions
	4. Activities on the occasion of the Grand Egyptian Museum opening, Cairo, Egypt.	Exact dates TBC	TBC
	5. Introductory meetings on UNWTO Affiliate Membership, Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi-Arabia.	Exact dates TBC	TBC
	6. Tourism and media Conference, Lebanon.	Dates TBC	TBC
	7. Tourism workshop on Crisis Communication, Lebanon.	Dates TBC	TBC
	8. Regional Conference on Gastronomy, Kuwait.	Q4	Ongoing discussions
	9. International Conference on Tourism and Culture, Egypt.	TBC	TBC
	10. UNWTO- Casa Árabe joint Webinar on the Tourism Recovery	2022	Ongoing discussion

<u>C.</u> <u>Conferences,</u> <u>Workshops</u> <u>and Webinars</u>	11. 3 rd UNWTO-ICCA joint Webinar	Q2, 2022	Ongoing discussion
	12. Webinar on Women in Tourism in the Middle East.	June 2021	Completed
	13. Webinar on Accessible Tourism for all in the Middle East.	TBC in 2022	Planned
	14. High-level experts' session in the framework of ATM, UAE	May 2022	Ongoing discussions
	Activities	Dates	Status
<u>D. Training</u>	1. Training of trainers for the course 'Women's empowerment in the tourism sector', Jordan	February 15 and 17, 2022.	Completed
	2. 2021 Global UNWTO Students' League	2021 Online Award ceremony held in 30.09.2021	Lebanon and Oman Students groups were among the Winners
	3. Executive training programme for Bahrain on: a. Tour guiding (2 nd phase); b. Entrepreneurship and innovation in tourism; c. Digital marketing strategy for tourism sector, and d. Tourism sustainability and competitiveness.	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	4. Online training on MST, Iraq	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	5. Rapid Gender Assessment Virtual Workshop, Jordan, KSA, Egypt	3 and 9 March 2022	Completed

<u>D. Training</u>	6. Centre Stage - Women's Empowerment Workshop (Jordan : Amman and Petra)	9 and 11 May	Ongoing discussions
	7. Establishing a UNWTO Crisis Management Centre in Egypt	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	8. Online Training/webinar/workshop on MST, Online training on Marketing, Kuwait	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	9. Executive training courses on Crisis Communication, Lebanon	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	10. UNWTO SDG Global Startup competition, Doha, Qatar	June 2021	Agreement signed
	11. Qatar Tourism Gastronomy strategy,	2022	Ongoing discussions
	12. Regional workshop on statistics, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia .	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	13. UNWTO- Saudi Arabia partnership in online education	April 2021	TBC
	14. Establishment of The Saudi Ministry of Tourism Academy in collaboration with UNWTO Academy, Saudi Arabia	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	15. Quality Assurance for Tourism Education Programmes for Al-Hukeir Institute for Tourism and Hospitality, Saudi Arabia	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	16. Quality Assurance for Tourism Education Programmes for the Royal Commission for Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	17. Innovation centre and Collaboration for creating a digital tourism index, Saudi Arabia	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	18. UNWTO Academy – Quest Training Programme. for the Department of Culture and Tourism in Abu Dhabi, UAE	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions

	Activities	Dates	Status
<u>E. Technical Assistance Projects</u>	1. EBRD Technical Assistance Programme / Recovery Project for Egypt (Building Resilience of Tourism Enterprises" – facilitating tourism recovery in the aftermath of COVID-19 in Egypt)	2020 Q4 – 2022 Q1	The project is at its final stage.
	2. EBRD Technical Assistance programme for Jordan on Facilitating Tourism Recovery in the Aftermath of COVID-19	2020 Q3 – 2022 Q2	Two activities have been completed, one is at its final stage, and one ongoing.
	3. Development of a strategic tourism plan for the empowerment of the local community in Saint Catherine in Egypt 2021-2022	Q3 TBC	(Agreement under discussion)
	4. Chimelong Technical Assistance Project, Lebanon	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussion
	5. Evaluation of the Measurement of Employment and Investment in the Tourism Sector, Oman	2022 Q2	The Agreement is under revision by the Ministry
	6. Revision of the Hotel Classification Scheme, Oman	2022 Q2	The Agreement is under revision by the Ministry
	7. Annual Tourism Experience Awards Programme, Qatar	2022 Q1 – Q3	Project was launched in February 2022 and is a continuation of project which was initiated in 2019 and put on hold due to COVID.

<u>E. Technical Assistance Projects</u>	8. Evaluation of Tourism Statistics System in Saudi Arabia (Phase I), Saudi Arabia	2021	Phase I was completed successfully
	9. Evaluation of Tourism Statistics System in Saudi Arabia (Phase II), Saudi Arabia	2022	Agreement was signed on 8 March
	10. Improving and strengthening the National Tourism Statistical System, and compilation of TSA tables, UAE	2022 – 2025	Project activities commenced in December 2021 and the project will be implemented over a 4-year period of time
<u>F. Online Meetings with Ministries</u>	1. Online Meeting with Lebanon's Ministry of Tourism	April, 2021	Completed
	1. Online Meeting with Kuwait's Ministry of Information, Tourism Sector	Oct. 2021	Completed
	2. Online Meeting with Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Tourism	Sep. 2021	Completed
<u>G. Institutional Meetings</u>	1. 48th CME meeting Cairo, Egypt	March 2022	Under preparation
	2. 116th session of the UNWTO Executive Council Saudi Arabia	June 2022	DTC
<u>H. Cooperation with International Organizations</u>	1. Arab Tourism Strategy jointly with the League of Arab States and other regional and Sub-regional organizations	2022	Ongoing
	2. Arab – Chinese cooperation in the field of tourism jointly with the League of Arab States and other regional and Sub-regional organizations	2022	Ongoing discussions

<u>H. Cooperation with International Organizations</u>	3. Green Finance Egypt, jointly with IFC	2022	Ongoing discussions
	4. Cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Countries Council Secretariat in the framework of the MoU signed with UNWTO	2022	Ongoing discussions
	5. Cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)	2022	Ongoing discussions
	6. Exploring collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB)	2022	Ongoing
	7. Ongoing collaboration with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. ATO (Arab Tourism Organization) ii. UNDP iii. UNCT in Abu Dhabi iv. ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association). v. Casa Árabe 	2022	Ongoing