TECHNICAL NOTE

THE 16th UNWTO ASIA/PACIFIC EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME
ON TOURISM POLICY AND STRATEGY

Investment in Sustainable Tourism

Monday, 07 - Friday, 11 November 2022
Seoul, Republic of Korea
(In-person)

Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific

World Tourism Organization
1. Background

Since 2006, the UNWTO has convened the Asia/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 of successful practices in policy and strategy formulation and implementation. The Executive Training Programme gives participants the opportunity 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 the opportune chance to learn about the most important issues in the tourism sector and engage with other high-level officials from the Asia-Pacific region. Participants are able to design and formulate policies and programmes in their respective destinations to further stimulate tourism growth and enable the sector to be a viable force for good.

The 16th edition of the Executive Training Programme will be held under the theme of ‘Investment in Sustainable Tourism’.

2. Context

In 2019, the international tourism sector again made a history, marking the tenth consecutive year of growth outpacing the global economy with 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals. It generated USD 1.7 trillion in export revenues, which represents 28% of the world’s service exports and 7% of overall exports of goods and services. Moreover, the tourism sector supported around 300 million jobs globally in 2019, according to the International Labour Organization. Over the years, the tourism sector has proven to be a global force for economic growth and development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought this remarkable tourism growth to a sudden halt and has had an enormous impact worldwide. The pandemic has hit hard investments in the tourism sector as well. Global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the tourism sector plummeted by 74% to $15.7bn, and job creation also fell by 72% in 2020 compared with the same period of 2019. This drop was a consequence of travel restrictions worldwide that generated a loss of 1 billion

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1 World Tourism Organization (2020c), UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, May 2020  
3 UNWTO Investment Guidelines – Enabling Frameworks for Tourism Investment (2021)  
international tourist arrivals which is almost a 75% decline of international tourist arrivals which represented US$ 1.3 trillion loss in export revenues from international tourism.  

As Covid vaccination rates increased, economies began to reopen slowly. More recent data shows the positive increase of foreign direct investment (FDI) projects in 2021. International arrivals are expected to reach 55% to 70% of pre-pandemic levels in 2022. However, companies are still faced with a raft of lingering issues such as supply chain disruptions and changing consumer demand patterns, as well as mounting economic and geopolitical challenges which continue to pose a risk to recovery. Amidst many uncertainties and difficulties, this pandemic has made clear that sustainable tourism should no longer be considered as an option and experts point to the need for a rebalancing of the ‘growth paradigm’ of existing development strategy.

Sustainability in tourism has been typically approached from an environmental and social perspective, and less so from an investment-oriented one. Recently, sustainable investments in the tourism sector have been oriented towards green transitions suggesting frameworks to shift from a growth-paradigm to a sustainable-paradigm in the long term in order to develop financial instruments for resilience and renewal of the tourism sector. Sustainable tourism will also require coordinated and ongoing high-level leadership agreement to monitor its growth, and to assess its positive and negative impacts, to effectively respond to opportunities and challenges as they arise, and to rapidly deploy future interventions globally and locally. Therefore, as stressed in different national and global fora, investments in tourism for sustainable development are a pivotal mandate when built upon broad stakeholder engagement and sustainable development principles contributing to more inclusive growth and green transitions.

In this context, the 16th edition of Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme, under the overarching theme of “Investment in Sustainable Tourism”, will focus on insights for understanding and enabling the conditions and barriers to mobilizing tourism investment, particularly in Asia and the Pacific region. The discussions will address measures for sustainable investments and enhance coordination and cooperation among stakeholders including the sector

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5 World Tourism Organization (2021), UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, January 2021
7 World Tourism Organization (2022), UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, May 2022
12 UNWTO Investment Guidelines – Enabling Frameworks for Tourism Investment (2021)
in terms of economic recovery, job creation and resilience post-COVID-19 to build a competitive, sustainable and inclusive tourism sector beyond the attraction and promotion approaches with the following sub-themes;

**Session I. Frameworks for Sustainable Tourism Investments**

This session provides insights on current challenges and barriers when investing in the tourism sector and emerging trends on the future of tourism investment, particularly in post-Covid-19 eras. The topics may focus on constraints/challenges in the financial systems in developing countries, foreign investor protection & its impact at the policy level based on data-driven evidence from the Members States and other key relevant partners.

**Session II. Investing in Green and Digital Tourism Transformation**

This session focuses on the main drivers to accelerate green and digital transformation in the tourism sector providing insights on emerging socioeconomic and technological changes to foster high-level cooperation and new institutional configurations. Examples and country case studies could focus on the development of hard and soft infrastructure to effectively respond to the growing and changing demand develop sustainable and inclusive finance mechanisms; and digital and green technologies to add value to the linkages of the global tourism value chain to respond to opportunities of green transitions and strengthen its competitiveness.

**Session III. Public Tourism Investment for Sustainable Growth in MSMEs**

This session concentrates on different policy considerations on tourism investment for harmonized development of MSMEs in tourism, which is equipped with service quality and environmental standards, including those related to health and safety, to raise the competitiveness of tourism destinations, particularly in developing community-based tourism.

**Session IV. Public-Private Partnership for Successful Investment in Sustainable Tourism**

With the understanding of the complexity of sustainable tourism investments, this session provides insights on strategic public-private partnerships on investments which have a critical role to play in the economic recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and in realizing the ambitious goals of SDGs. The session focuses on emerging socioeconomic and technological changes to foster high-level cooperation and new institutional configurations for public-private partnerships for tourism investment. In addition, Good Practices and Case Studies on tourism investment experiences and strategies through successful PPP could be highlighted.

3. **Training Programme Objective**

The overall theme for the 16th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme is **Investment in Sustainable Tourism**, which is a pressing topic for destinations across the globe.
The programme is specifically designed to support tourism policymakers and managers. It aims at strengthening effective and responsive policies and strategies that in turn must adapt to changing priorities and concerns at national and destination levels.

The overall objectives of the training programme are to understand the impact of the pandemic in the investment in tourism sector and look for the approaches to enhance the collaboration with tourism stakeholders for the investment in sustainable tourism with a focus on the following areas:

- Foster cooperation and encourage the implementation of sustainable investment frameworks for the promotion of tourism investments and job creation post COVID-19.
- Promote ease of doing business including measures to safeguard, attract and promote tourism investment projects during and after the pandemic for a faster economic recovery.
- Diffuse knowledge on travel and tourism investments trends and guidelines to maximizing its impact.

Moreover, the training programme strives to enable UNWTO’s Asia and the Pacific Member Countries to share successful tourism practices on investment in sustainable 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 16th Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme will start on 07 November 2022 with the Opening ceremony and Forum on Tourism Investment, which will be open to local participants to broaden the discussion.

From 07 to 09 November, there are four training sessions, and each session will focus on topics regarding investment in sustainable tourism. Each session has a similar structure, with an opening speech (shorter than 20 minutes), followed by Q&A. After that, country presentations (4-6 in each session, all shorter than 10 minutes) address specificities and highlight the best practices on each topic. These country presentations will detail national policies, strategies, and programmes to support tourism investment. Later, discussions will be held for all delegates so that they can share their country’s views and recommendations for policy on each topic. A final panel discussion and technical conclusion will serve as a general wrap up of previous Sessions.

On 10 November, there will be a special forum regarding Sustainable Tourism hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea. The forum will explore issues for sustainable tourism from various perspectives and address international cooperation for sustainable tourism. Through this forum, participants will be able to gain insights for sustainable development and growth, especially in the tourism sector after COVID-19 pandemic.

The last day of the event on 11 November will consist of a Technical Tour organized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea. This tour and other social events are a wonderful opportunity for delegates to experience the culture and beauty of the Republic of Korea and network with tourism leaders across Asia and the Pacific region.