

**UNWTO Commission for the Middle East**  
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The Dead Sea, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan  
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## **Item 4 of the Agenda**

### **Report of the UNWTO Regional Director for the Middle East Implementation of the Programme of Work in the Middle East 2022-2023 (Regional and technical activities)**

#### **I. Overview of international trends and outlook in the Middle East**

1. According to UNWTO Barometer, International tourism saw stronger than expected results in 2022, backed by large pent-up demand and the lifting or relaxation of travel restrictions in a large number of countries. The Middle East enjoyed the strongest relative increase across regions in 2022 with arrivals climbing to 83% of pre-pandemic numbers (-17% versus 2019). During the period January-September 2022, the Middle East saw international arrivals more than triple (+225%), climbing to 77% of pre-pandemic levels.
2. The stereotypical visitor groups to the region – mainly traders and pilgrims, have become more diverse and now include tourists visiting for leisure, recreation, medical treatment, business and events. Big events including Expo 2020 Dubai, Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia and the FIFA World Cup in Qatar 2022 helped drive visitors back to the Middle East.
3. Based on UNWTO's scenarios for 2023, The Middle East expected to reach 80% to 95% of pre-pandemic levels this year, levels. However, important risks remain ahead, especially economic and geopolitical. It is expected that the Middle East could also recover 2019 levels throughout 2023 after a strong rebound in 2022.

#### **II. Main challenges and opportunities in the Region affecting the tourism sector**

##### **Current and future challenges:**

Challenges and strategic objectives for 2022-2023 aim, among others, at accelerating consolidate recovery and sustain growth while establishing strategic frameworks and strengthening NTAs institutional capabilities and promoting investment.

4. Economic, health and geopolitical headwinds could weigh on the sustained recovery of international tourism and confidence levels in 2023.
5. The UNWTO Panel of Experts' most recent survey indicates that the major obstacle to the tourist industry's recovery is the hard economic environment, which includes rising inflation and interest rates, a surge in the price of food and oil, as well as concerns about a potential worldwide recession. Economic situation could translate into tourists adopting a more cautious attitude in 2023, with reduced spending, shorter trips and travel closer to home.

6. Political unrest in the world and, mainly, the wider effect of the war in Ukraine had an overall impact on the performance of economies in Member states, as well as other escalating geopolitical tensions, health issues associated to COVID-19, and labour shortages.

7. Environmental pressures are also critical. Climate change has many effects on the region. Since the mid-twentieth century, warmer days and nights, intensified heatwaves and increased dryness have been observed throughout the Middle East. The major implications for these changes include increased water scarcity, sea level rise, coral bleaching, algal blooms and extreme weather events.

### **Opportunities:**

Actually, 2022 has been the year to rethink tourism. Countries around the world turned UNWTO's vision for a greener, smarter and more inclusive sector into real action.

8. The latest UNWTO Confidence Index shows cautious optimism for January-April, higher than the same period in 2022. This optimism is backed by the opening up in Asia and strong spending numbers in 2022 from both traditional and emerging tourism source markets, with France, Germany and Italy as well as Qatar, India and Saudi Arabia all posting strong results.

9. National tourism plans with a clear vision and goals must be developed; effective governance has to be ensured in aligning the functions of all public sectors with these plans; new source tourist markets need to be identified to complement existing ones; destinations should be ready with appropriate infrastructure and services, and marketing campaigns need to be designed to connect with the target markets. Furthermore, sustainability, innovation and technology are instrumental to the entire process. Providing value-added services that accurately meet demand will help attract higher value tourists and foster repeat visitors.

10. Through continuous relations with each and every Member State, as well as with the Affiliate Members of the Middle East, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) aims to ensure a fair, yet strategic, geographically balanced distribution of its activities in the region. Its programme of activities in the region is built around the following five strategic priorities, which are also part of the SDG's:

- Make tourism smarter: innovation and the digital transformation SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 17
- Grow our competitive edge: investments and entrepreneurship SDGs 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17
- Create more and better jobs: education and employment SDGs 4, 8, 10 and 17
- Build resilience and facilitate travel: safe, secure and seamless travel SDGs 3, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 16
- Protect our heritage: social, cultural and environmental sustainability SDGs 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

11. For a more efficient and relevant action in the Middle East, UNWTO's Strategic objectives and approaches in the region are based on Members' needs mainly:

- Marketing, Branding and Positioning
- Development and diversification
- Sustainability, green transformation
- Reinforce Investment in tourism infrastructure
- Human capital Development and capacity building
- Institutional strengthening, Legal framework
- Quality and compliance with International Standards
- Foster innovation and digital transformation
- Create more and better jobs and strengthening entrepreneurship
- Build resilience and facilitate travel
- Empowering Women

### **III. Political visits in the Middle East region and key outcomes:**

12. During 2022, the Secretary-General visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of:

a) UNWTO 116th session of the Executive Council followed by a thematic session on *Tourism Futures — New Governance and Advocacy* aiming to determine the potential drive to sustain the industry in a post-pandemic era by exploring challenges and opportunities that govern global communication.

b) Rural tourism has a high potential to stimulate local economic growth and social change because of its complementarity with other economic activities, its contribution to GDP and job creation, and its capacity to promote the dispersal of demand in time (fight seasonality) and along a wider territory. Among the projects being managed by ROME is the UNWTO Global Tourism and Rural Development Programme which includes the World's Best Tourism Villages Initiative (BTV), an international initiative that was launched during the 47th CME meeting held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in the newly opened Regional Office. The most recent ceremony was also held in AIUla, Saudi Arabia on 12 March 2023. A week later UNWTO launched the third edition of its BTV initiative. Alongside the ceremony itself, the First Annual Meeting of the Best Tourism Villages Network, held in AIUla in the same period was also a platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, challenges and opportunities between the participating villages. The Award Ceremony of the Best Tourism Villages (BTV), in AIUla, on 12 March 2023 was held back-to-back with the first presentational meeting of the UNWTO Network of BTV. A total of 32 villages (2 from the Middle East) from 22 countries across the five world regions were awarded the recognition. The Best Tourism Villages initiative by UNWTO showcases the power of the sector to drive economic diversification and create opportunities for all outside of big cities

13. UNWTO's Regional Director participation in the Arab Ministerial Council for Tourism meetings organized by the League of Arab States, provides an excellent opportunity to maintain collaboration with regional organization and coordinate relevant activities of the Programme of Work in the region.

14. UNWTO's Regional Director participation in the Arabian Travel Market (Dubai) aims to advance intra-regional tourism and seize the growing opportunities emerging for increased cooperation, and the Annual Investment Forum (Abu Dhabi) in the United Arab Emirates had the objective to strengthen UNWTO's investment portfolio and outreach.

### **IV. UNWTO major initiatives, services, projects and activities:**

15. In line with UNWTO vision and strategy, the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Middle East (CME) places inclusive community development at the heart of tourism policies through education, investment, innovation and technology to transform the livelihoods of many millions, while also preserving our environment and our culture and drive a more inclusive and sustainable recovery of tourism

16. The International Code for the Protection of Tourists (ICPT) is a comprehensive set of principles and recommendations on the protection of tourists in emergency situations, not limited to pandemics, and the rights of tourists as consumers, aimed at restoring consumer confidence in travel and providing sufficient guarantees to international tourists in the post COVID-19 environment. The Regional Department for the Middle East organized in January 2023 an informative webinar for the Middle East Member States to raise awareness about the Code.

17. The 5<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), 5-9 March 2023, Doha, Qatar:

a) The High-level event of the UN Secretary-General with Principals of the UN system, "A Decade of UN Action to Support LDCs", provided a unique opportunity for UNWTO to participate and share with other heads of UN agencies the key role of tourism for 46 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) economies and societies. The need to rethink the UN system support and collaboration in the sphere of the circular economy, biodiversity, communities and digitalization for LDCs to regain lost ground on the SDGs and progress towards graduation from the LDC category

b) On this occasion, UNWTO hosted a special side event on “*Harnessing Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Tourism as Tools for Sustainable Development in LDCs*”, in collaboration with Qatar Tourism. Startups from the UNWTO SDGs Global Startups Competition pitched their solutions helping to drive change in their countries alongside a panel discussion on how Innovation and Partnerships in Tourism can accelerate economic development.

#### 18. UNWTO initiatives in Education:

UNWTO has identified education as one of its key priorities for the sector. While tourism is already a leading employer and a top provider of opportunity, most notably for women and youth, UNWTO is working to expand access to education, training and jobs and to support those already working in the sector to develop professionally.

a) During ITB Berlin 2023, UNWTO and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have signed the project Human Capital Development by E-Learning which main outputs were: 10 Online Courses in 5 languages, Jobs Factory and Tourism Labour Market Observatory, UNWTO Ted-Qual Certification and Innovation and Digital Transformation programmes. For this end, the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East (ROME) was opened in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 26 May 2021. It is a result of the CME's work to achieving sustainable growth in the tourism sector, developing human capital, and implementing specific tourism statistics for the Middle East, as well as to provide UNWTO with a base from which to guide tourism's development across the whole region.

b) In this same line, the creation of the International Academies in collaboration with UNWTO for supporting Member States' efforts to provide high-quality vocational and managerial education to their tourism workforce is advancing with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Organization and the Ministry of Tourism will sign a cooperation agreement for train-the-trainers and executive programmes to be launched officially during the year.

c) The UNWTO Tourism Online Academy continues to grow. Its portfolio now includes courses being enjoyed by over 20,700 students. 2000 scholarships will be processed to Member States during the upcoming Regional Commissions.

d) Education programmes by UNWTO Academy: Bahrain (4 courses) will be delivered during 2023, benefiting 100 persons.

e) The Educational Toolkit of education for Member State schools (secondary stage) is an initiative that started from the Middle East, upon the recommendation of the Arab Republic of Egypt -during the 48<sup>th</sup> Regional Commission Meeting held in Cairo, last year. The aim of the toolkit is to promote education and human capital development in tourism focused on implementing tourism as a subject in high schools. It will provide a set of informative resources that can be used by faculty and students to enable them to review the requirements within the tourism sector and to use the toolkit to support them in choosing a suitable methodology and curricula for their school system to integrate tourism as a subject.

f) The cooperation in Sharjah University is focused on online education including the creation of a specific course on Strategic Communication for tourism for UNWTO Tourism Online Academy addressed to professionals and individuals seeking to learn introductory concepts and expand their knowledge on strategic communication for the tourism industry.

g) The UNWTO Ted.Qual Certification is awarded to those programmes that comply with the minimum quality standards set by UNWTO. For improving the Quality in Tourism Education at national level in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a cascade model is proposed, in order to replicate the best programmes and practices throughout all regions.

- 30 KSA programmes pre- assessed
- 15 new programmes designed 5 existing programs audited and certified
- 7 institutions implementing new programmes

h) KSA Jobs Factory harnesses the power of machine learning, algorithms, and deep learning to match candidates with suitable positions, both locally and internationally. Job-seekers are able to search for positions that match their experience and skills, and set up job alerts to be

informed of the latest opportunities. The platform also helps tourism businesses and organizations to find and recruit the best talent.

i) Tourism Labor Market Observatory (TLMO): Addressing the need for monitoring current and future skills development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, facilitating intelligent labor market data collection and to spearheading similar initiatives in the wider region. Pioneer project as currently there is lack of data on tourism education and jobs. It will lead change by crossing education and jobs data for improving tourism employment.

18. Foster sustainable and green transition: social aspects, culture, and environment: Sustainability and the green transformation of tourism took centre stage in October as the UNWTO International Network of Tourism Observatories (INSTO) welcomed more members, and Ministers agreed to advance circularity and climate action. We encourage Member States to join INSTO network and to participate in the webinars organized by the network to share their experiences and lessons learned and to benefit from their publications.

19. In line with UNWTO's wider commitment to advancing tourism for climate action, plans are in place to make ROME a hub for promoting green investments in the tourism sector, both in the region and worldwide, including through projects developed in partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and other partners such as the Saudi Tourism Development Fund (TDF).

a) UNWTO contributed with two high-level events to the UNFCCC COP 27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, bringing together leading policy makers and corporate leaders, all signatories of the Glasgow Declaration, to share practical insights into accelerating the shift towards Net Zero through decarbonization and regeneration. We invite Middle East Member States to become signatories of the Glasgow Declaration as we shared with them the operation guidelines to implement the Declaration.

b) One Planet: UNWTO has renewed its role as lead of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme for the period 2023-2024 to continue positioning circularity and sustainable consumption and production as key strategies to address the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

20. Climate action:

a) In December 2022, the Baseline Report on Climate Action in Tourism was released presenting the results of the Global Survey on Climate Action in Tourism which collected inputs from more than 1000 stakeholders (Businesses represent 68.9% of respondents from the Middle East).

b) In March 2023, the Overview of Methodologies and Tools to Measure Greenhouse Gas Emissions, developed with support from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of Germany (BMUV), was released in collaboration with UNFCCC. Saudi Arabia Airlines, Emirates, Qatar Airways and Emirates Holidays were some of the companies reviewed for systematic review of climate commitments.

21. After the successful experience during COP 27 in Egypt, we look forward to organizing similar activities related to the UNWTO climate action Plan in the framework COP 28 in the UAE and bringing leading sector stakeholders together to share practical insights into accelerating the shift to greater sustainability. RDME is ready to start coordinating with colleagues on this subject. Meanwhile, there are also ongoing discussions for the new INSTO Observatory in Oman.

22. Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST): UNWTO is leading the way to a new United Nations measurement standard focused on tourism's sustainability. The Statistical Framework for MST will support the production of data that is more comparable, integrated and credible to guide decisions and policy, including the Sustainable Development Goals and beyond.

23. To date, 25 countries (including Middle East countries) and sub-national destinations have implemented an MST pilot. The publication "Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism: Learnings from Pilots", was launched at the Symposium on MST country experiences. 7 countries from the Middle East region (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab

Emirates) were featured as a best practice. Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) programme aims to provide an internationally agreed framework to measure the impacts and dependencies of tourism on the economy, society and the environment, both at national and subnational levels. This initiative is being led by UNWTO in partnership with the United Nations Statistics Division and leading countries, and with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

24. In the same context, many projects have been conducted over the last years, especially the Evaluation of Tourism Statistics System, Phase II, (KSA) and the Assessment of the Tourism Statistics for the Compilation of TSA for the UAE (ongoing until 2026), while further discussions are ongoing for the implementation of the following:

- Statistics Summit and working Group Meeting
- Improving the Statistical system in Kuwait; and
- Familiarization with MST standards for all Member States of the region.

25. Gender equality and women's empowerment: The main outcomes of the global Centre Stage Project, including the project in Jordan, were presented during the world Travel Market (WTM) 2022. The project has been a success story and was successfully implemented in the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan from where it started for the first time. After the success of the Centre Stage in Jordan in 2022, there are ongoing discussion for the implementation of the project's phase 2, while also exploring possibilities to duplicate the project in other Middle East Countries.

26. The Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector was developed with support from the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for SDG12 and released for public consultation in December 2022, during the UNWTO 7th World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, following the implementation of an online training series on sustainable food management which involved over 300 stakeholders and the release of an online repository including 15 tools and resources.

27. UNWTO provided substantial inputs to the UN Water outcome document, the Water Action agenda, underscoring the role of tourism in safeguarding water resources and contributing to the acceleration of Sustainable Development Goal 6, to "Ensure access to water and sanitation for all".

28. Tourism for Rural Development: The villages recognized under the second edition of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO were announced at the end of 2022 and the candidacies for the 2023 edition opened on 23 March until 23 June. The Ceremony for the 2022 Edition as well as the First Annual Meeting of the Best Tourism Villages Network took place in AlUla, Saudi Arabia, on 12-13 March 2023. It was a remarkable achievement that under the leadership of the 2020 G20 Saudi Presidency, UNWTO and the G20 Tourism Working Group have developed AlUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism and the G20 Tourism Ministers Meeting: Diriyah Communiqué, to help fulfil the sector's potential to contribute to and achieve inclusive community development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

29. To advance Member States skills in this area, the UNWTO ROME will conduct the First Executive Training on Tourism for Rural Development: a Practical Approach to Strategy and Product Development on 8-10 May for Member States in the Middle East.

30. Scale up innovation and digital transformation:

a) The first UNWTO Women in Tech Startup Competition for the Middle East has been launched to source female-led startups in 4 main categories; Announced at Biban 2023, Saudi Arabia's largest SME conference, the Women in Tech Startup Competition: Middle East, will further advance UNWTO's work to make tourism a pillar of women's empowerment. The initiative gives innovators the chance to compete for enhanced capacity building and visibility. Finalists in each category will join the UNWTO Innovation Network, giving them access to the UNWTO Member States network, mentorship programs and to UNWTO scholarship opportunities.

b) UNWTO Digital Futures for SMEs Programme has reached 970 registrations from 135 countries with its diagnostic tool, which is now available in English, French and Arabic; and

c) Awake Tourism Challenge: 15 winners out of 2,000 participants from 120 countries, including the Middle East, were released.

## **V. Bilateral relationships and Regional and sub-regional cooperation;**

31. RDME is currently exploring collaboration with new partners from the region, mainly:

- *King Salman Global Academy for Arabic Language* to enhance the presence of the Arabic language in UNWTO.
- MOU *King Saud University* (Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management) on education and training; with King Saud University: UNWTO and KSU will cooperate in the implementation of projects including some of the following areas:
  - Collaborate in research activities in tourism.
  - Promote and drive training opportunities and programmes.
  - Advocate training opportunities for recent graduates.
  - Fostering initiatives of mutual interest related to education in tourism.
  - To strengthen the leadership role in tourism education.

Status of the project: Circulation in progress

- *Qatar Foundation*

32. UNWTO has signed MoUs with some Regional Organizations in the Middle East, mainly:

- The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); and
- The Arab Tourism Organization (ATO)
- Ongoing discussions are being held with the League of Arab States for the signature of a cooperation MoU

33. UNWTO Proposal to the League of Arab States and the Arab Tourism Organization to cooperate in the creation of the Tourism Innovation Observatory for Arab Member States.

Objectives:

- To promote education and human capital development through the creation of massive online open courses designed for Digital and Tech Entrepreneurship for the MENA region.
- To promote innovation through the implementation of the Arabian Tourism Innovation Report to help understand the region's strengths and weaknesses in terms of innovation, its key players, and emerging technologies.

Activities:

- Creation of MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) focused on Digital, and Tech Entrepreneurship for the MENA Region provided through the UNWTO Tourism Online Academy.
- Creation and implementation of the Arabian Tourism Innovation Report to provide analysis of the latest trends, developments, and opportunities in the region's innovation landscape for recommendations to organizations, entrepreneurs, and investors.

Status of the project: Currently working on the agreement.

### Annex I: List of UNWTO events in the Middle East

Date	Event	Venue
<b>May 2022</b>		
9 -11	Centre Stage Women Empowerment during the Covid-19 recovery (in-person Training Workshops)	Amman, Petra Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
<b>June 2022</b>		
7-8	UNWTO 116 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council	Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
<b>November 2022</b>		
7-18	COP27 – Glasgow Declaration	Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt
10	16 <sup>th</sup> CTS Meeting	Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt
<b>April 2023</b>		
(30 April - 8 May)	The UNWTO Academy Course "Training for Tourist Guides" (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> batches)	Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
<b>May 2023</b>		
1-4	UNWTO participation in the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) Session: Disrupting Destinations: How Technology is Influencing Growth Session: Planting the Sustainability Seed: Changing Culture with Education	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
8-10	1 <sup>st</sup> Executive Training on “Tourism for Rural Development: A Practical Approach to Strategy and Product Development”	Organized by the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East, Riyadh, KSA
9	UNWTO side event on “Transforming Tourism Investments for People, Planet and Prosperity”, on the occasion of the Annual Investment Meeting.(AIM)	Abu Dhabi, UAE.



(May - June) Dates TBC	The UNWTO Academy Course "Training for Tourist Guides" (3rd and 4th batches)	Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
<b>June 2023</b>		
7-9 June	49 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Regional Commission for the Middle East (CME) UNWTO Conference on Medical and Wellness Tourism	The Dead Sea, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
<b>September 2023</b>		
27	World Tourism Day	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Annex II . List of new Affiliate Members from the Middle East**

<b>Name of Affiliate Member</b>	<b>Member State</b>	<b>Date of Joining</b>
Jeddah Central Development Company	(Saudi Arabia)	During the EC 117th session
Petra Development And Tourism Region Authority (Jordan)	(Jordan)	During the EC 117th session

## Annex III: Detailed list of technical assistance projects in the Middle East

Name	Start and end date, place	Beneficiary	Donor	Status and Remarks
Training for tourist Guides 1st batch 2nd, 3rd and 4th batches	Bahrain 30 April- 8May 2023 May- June (Dates TBC)	Ministry of Tourism + BTEA	UNWTO Academy	1st batch: 30 April – 8 May Done
Proposal for the organization of the World Forum Gastronomy 2024	Bahrain	Ministry of Tourism + BTEA		Ongoing, awaiting the decision on the host country during the 8 <sup>th</sup> UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism 5-6 October 2023, San Sebastian, Spain
Educational booklet for the primary stage of education for member state schools and included it in the academic curricular of 2022-2023	Egypt	MSs in the Middle East Region	UNWTO	Ongoing
Agreement between UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism of Egypt on the Development of a Strategic Tourism Plan for The Empowerment of The Local Community in Saint Catherine In Egypt Saint-Catherine between UNWTO and MOTA-Egypt. (Awaiting Egypt's approval on the Agreement)		Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	UNWTO	Ongoing
MOTA-Egypt confirmed its availability to take part in the activities to increase Fuwah village (upgrade Village) potentials in		Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities Fuwah Village	UNWTO	Ongoing

order to be recognized as Best Tourism Village				
Training for 30 hotels at least on green investments and green finance mechanisms in collaboration with IFC.		Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	UNWTO	Ongoing Supporting the tourism sector and upgrading the staff working in the sector.
UNWTO-EBRD Project Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19 (Done)		Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	UNWTO, EBRD	Done
A Course on Introduction to Tourism Industry Management was received by officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Members of Iraqi Tourism Authority (June 28, 2022).	Iraq	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	UNWTO	Done. With the aim to support the tourism sector and upgrading the staff working in the sector.
Training programme on the TSA application. Development and preservation of the Iraqi heritage. Implementation of e-governance. Encouraging stable investment environment. Encouraging domestic tourism and improving the tourism services.				
Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19 (Within the UNWTO/EBRD collaboration to support COVID-19 Tourism Recovery in 10 countries).	2020 – 2023  Jordan	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	UNWTO/EBRD	Agreement signed and project activities commenced in July 2020 with training of inspectors on the newly launched safety and operational protocols. In March 2021, SOPs were further reviewed and strengthened, and the activity completed in July 2021. The Market Intelligence Systems and Dashboard activity, as well as the Future of Tourism Roadmap, have been completed. UNWTO to translate final reports.

Declaration of Jordan as a Medical and Wellness Tourism hub in the Middle east region		Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	TBC	
Training and technical assistance including the UNWTO/ETC Data Lab initiative, training activities, and technical assistance		Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	UNWTO	Ongoing
The implementation of the Tourism Satellite Account in cooperation with the Central Statistical Bureau in Kuwait.	Kuwait	Ministry of Information	UNWTO	Ongoing
Organizing a Gastronomy Forum Preparing a gastronomy Brochure				Ongoing discussion
Technical assistance on DMOs, and training on management of nature-based destinations; includes Technical assistance on rural Tourism. Institutional enhancement and building flexibility. Tourism Promotion and Marketing. Supporting domestic tourism. Encouraging expats to visit their home country.	2022-2023 Lebanon	Ministry of Tourism	UNWTO + Chimelong	Ongoing. Donor's approval was received recently. Communication with Lebanon is in process to implement the time plan of the TOR.
Free online training	Libya	Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Handicrafts	UNWTO	Done. To support the tourism sector and upgrading the staff working in the sector.
The Revision of the Hotel Classification Scheme.	2023 Oman	Ministry of Heritage and Tourism	Ministry of Heritage and Tourism	Ongoing. Agreement signed in November 2022 A formulation mission was conducted in February 2023 to undertake a review of the current status of quality services in tourism accommodation establishments, and to prepare a project document to update the hotel classification scheme.

Development of a Tourism Statistics and TSA.				Ongoing discussion
Technical assistance in Market Intelligence and Marketing, Branding and Promotion.				Ongoing discussion
Investment forum, event, start-up competition aiming to connect with major investors to promote the innovative ideas. The event could be held in presence or virtually				Ongoing discussion to support Oman in organizing the event and related activities
Annual Tourism Experience Awards Programme	2018-2023 Qatar	Qatar Tourism (QT)	Qatar Tourism (QT)	Project activities commenced in 2018 – however, the launch of the Awards programme was put on hold in 2019 due to administrative changes in NCT and COVID-19 in 2020. A new Agreement for the remaining activities was signed, and project activities resumed in May 2023, with the final ceremony in November 2023.
Evaluation of Tourism Statistics System	2020-2023  Saudi Arabia	Ministry of Tourism		A project formulation mission on the Evaluation of the National Tourism Statistical System and Calculation Methodology of Inbound Tourism and Tourism Expenditure was successfully completed in February 2020. A follow-up project was launched in January 2021 and is being implemented in two phases. Phase I was completed successfully in September 2021 and focused on reviewing and improving the methodologies of calculating inbound, outbound and domestic tourism and investigating the use of credit/debit cards, mobile phone data and artificial intelligence in tourism statistical processes. Activities of Phase II were launched in

				September 2022 and focus on ensuring that the recommendations devised in Phase I are applied correctly and within the framework of the UNWTO recommendations of tourism statistics; delivering a capacity building workshop with officials in charge of operating the model and collecting, processing, and analysing data The Final Phase II of the project report was submitted to the Ministry of Tourism of KSA for approval in March 2023.
Establishment of a UNWTO International Tourism Academy	Saudi Arabia	Ministry of Tourism		Ongoing. Providing high-quality vocational and managerial education to the tourism workforce
Cooperation Agreement between UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Human Capital Development by E-Learning, done at Riyadh on 26 May 2021.	Saudi Arabia	Ministry of Tourism		Ongoing. The main outputs are: 10 Online Courses in 5 languages, Jobs Factory and Tourism Labour Market Observatory, UNWTO Ted.Qual Quality Certification and Innovation and Digital Transformation programmes.
Cooperation agreement for train-the-trainers and executive programmes to be launched officially during the year.	Saudi Arabia	Ministry of Tourism		Ongoing
Provide the Ministry of Tourism in Syria with technical assistance - in collaboration with UNDP-Syria -for the Review of the Potential to Develop Social and Voluntary Tourism and Tourism Awareness (Internal discussion going on).	Syria	Ministry of Tourism	UNWTO, UNDP	(Internal discussion going on) Upgrading the education and training in the tourism sector and providing up-to-date interactive curricula. Upgrading the tourism services. Attracting investment opportunities through completion of tourism planning.

Tourism Statistics and TSA	2021-2026 UAE	Ministry of Economy	Ministry of Economy	Ongoing Project activities were launched in November 2021 with a detailed analysis of the situation of tourism statistics in the UAE. A detailed Road Map for the compilation of a TSA for the UAE was presented in February 2022 and activities for the implementation of the Road Map are ongoing. Phase II of the project, focused on preparing the methodology for updating the tourism statistics system and building a TSA, was completed in February 2023. Preparations are underway to start Phase III focused on building the TSA based on surveys on inbound, outbound and domestic tourism
UNWTO Academy – Quest Training Programme for the Department of Culture and Tourism in Abu Dhabi				Ongoing
Free online training (100 scholarships)	Yemen	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	UNWTO	Done. Supporting the tourism sector and upgrading the staff working in the sector.



