



Dear Affiliate Members,

I am pleased to introduce you to a new edition of the Affiliate Members Newsletter. This monthly publication will inform you about the latest news, events, and initiatives related to your membership and our Affiliate Members network. Also included is the updated calendar of events for 2023, featuring the main UNWTO events and those carried out by our Affiliate Members, with the participation of the Affiliate Members Department or the UNWTO.

Before immersing ourselves in the holiday spirit, I would like to draw your attention to a few noteworthy events and initiatives that have recently involved our Affiliate Members, and that will be covered in details in this issue:

- World Travel Market London
- International Congress on Thermal Tourism
- Working Meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members
- UNWTO Affiliate Members Working Session
- Seoul Sustainable Tourism Conference 2023
- 7th UNWTO World Global Conference on Wine Tourism

The increased level of participation of our Affiliate Members, both during events organized by UNWTO, and during events organized by other Affiliate Members is a very positive sign that our network is growing stronger, allowing us to establish fruitful business relationships within the network. This increased engagement contributes to the success of our shared goals and the Organization's mission of developing a more responsible sustainable and accessible tourism industry.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude for the significant number of proposals we received from our Affiliate Members in response to the Call for Proposals for UNWTO's General PoW 2024-2025. We are excited to put these visionary initiatives into action starting in 2024 and to collaborate closely with our Affiliate Members, reinforcing the Organization's mission to build a more sustainable tourism industry.

The Affiliate Members Department will continue to collaborate and support the Affiliate Members' initiatives to the best of its capabilities. As usual, I am at your disposal and look forward to hearing any comments you might have.

Yours sincerely,

Ion Vilcu

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ion Vilcu', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

AMD

the Affiliate Members Department

The UNWTO Affiliate Members Department (AMD) fosters public-private cooperation in tourism and the synergies among Affiliate Members and Member States. Bringing together around 500 private companies, associations, educational institutions, and DMOs, the UNWTO Affiliate Membership provides an unparalleled space for members to engage in dialogue, exchange knowledge, support new measures and create synergies that promote the development of the sector, and contribute to the promotion of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



OUR MISSION

Helping private entities to forge alliances, fostering dialogue and collaboration, as well as strengthen synergies between Member States and Affiliate Members to face the challenges of the tourism sector

OUR PURPOSE

Supporting the development of the tourism sector by contributing to the achievement Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations

OUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Assisting our members in the development of a more inclusive, responsible, sustainable and accessible tourism industry

Main Objectives of the Membership

- 1 VISIBILITY**
Enhance the work of our Affiliate Members through the new communication channels
- 2 NETWORKING**
Promote the creation of alliances among like-minded Affiliate Members and Member States around the world
- 3 PARTICIPATION**
Facilitate the participation of our Affiliate Members in major events and international initiatives that will provide them with value and visibility
- 4 KNOWLEDGE**
Collect and share information, data, and research relevant to the Tourism Industry
- 5 COOPERATION**
Foster collaboration in joint projects with the UNWTO and in business projects among Affiliate Members
- 6 SUPPORT**
Offer institutional support and endorsement to promote new projects developed by the Affiliate Members
- 7 DEVELOPMENT**
Create opportunities for new innovative business projects for Affiliate Members that will contribute to the sustainable development of the Tourism sector

AGENDA OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS - EVENTS 2023

UNWTO STATUTORY AND HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS

UNWTO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

16-20 Oct.	<u>25th UNWTO General Assembly</u>	Samarkand, Uzbekistan	In Person
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UNWTO PLENARY SESSION

16 Oct.	<u>44th AMs Plenary Session</u>	Samarkand, Uzbekistan	In Person
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UNWTO EXECUTIVE COUNCILS

17 Oct.	119th Session of the UNWTO Executive Council	Samarkand, Uzbekistan	In Person
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20 Oct.	120th Session of the UNWTO Executive Council	Samarkand, Uzbekistan	In Person
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UNWTO REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

31 May-2 June	<u>68th Regional Commission for Europe</u>	Sofia, Bulgaria	In Person
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7-8 June	<u>49th Regional Commission for the Middle East</u>	Dead Sea, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,	In Person
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15-17 June	<u>35th CAP-CSA, 55th CAP, 59th CSA</u>	Phnom Penh, Cambodia	In Person
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27-28 June	<u>68th Regional Commission for the Americas</u>	Quito, Ecuador	In Person
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26-28 July	<u>66th Regional Commission for Africa</u>	Mauritius	In Person
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BOARD OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS

6 Nov.	Working Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members	WTM, London, UK	In Person
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UNWTO/AMD THEMATIC EVENTS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS

26-27 April	<u>2nd World Sports Tourism Congress</u>	Zadar, Croatia	In Person/ Hybrid
27 Sept.	<u>World Tourism Day</u>	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	In Person/ Hybrid
5-7 Oct.	<u>8th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism</u>	San Sebastian, Spain	In Person/ Hybrid
22-24 Nov.	<u>7th UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism</u>	La Rioja, Spain	In Person/ Hybrid

UNWTO AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT EVENTS

15 June	<u>UNWTO Affiliate Members Roundtable: Public-Private Cooperation at the Core of Tourism Sustainable Development</u>	35th CAP-CSA Phnom Penh, Cambodia	In Person
17 Oct.	In Conversation with UNWTO Affiliate Members	Within the framework of the UNWTO General Assembly	In Person
15 Nov.	UNWTO Affiliate Members Working Session	Within the framework of the Seoul Sustainable Tourism Conference 2023	In Person

AFFILIATE MEMBERS' EVENTS WITH UNWTO/AMD SUPPORT

World Leisure Organization	11-15 Dec.	17th World Leisure Congress	Dunedin, New Zealand
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OTHERS AFFILIATE MEMBERS' EVENTS

City Destination Alliance	29-30 Jan.	CityDNA Annual CEO Meeting	Brussels, Belgium
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AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES A NEW PLATFORM FOR AFFILIATE MEMBERS: AMCONNECTED+

As announced during the 44th Affiliate Members Plenary Session, in the framework of the 25th UNWTO General Assembly, this month AMConnected+ has been launched.

The new platform will offer a modernized virtual space to enhance the collaboration and information exchange among the Affiliate Members' network.

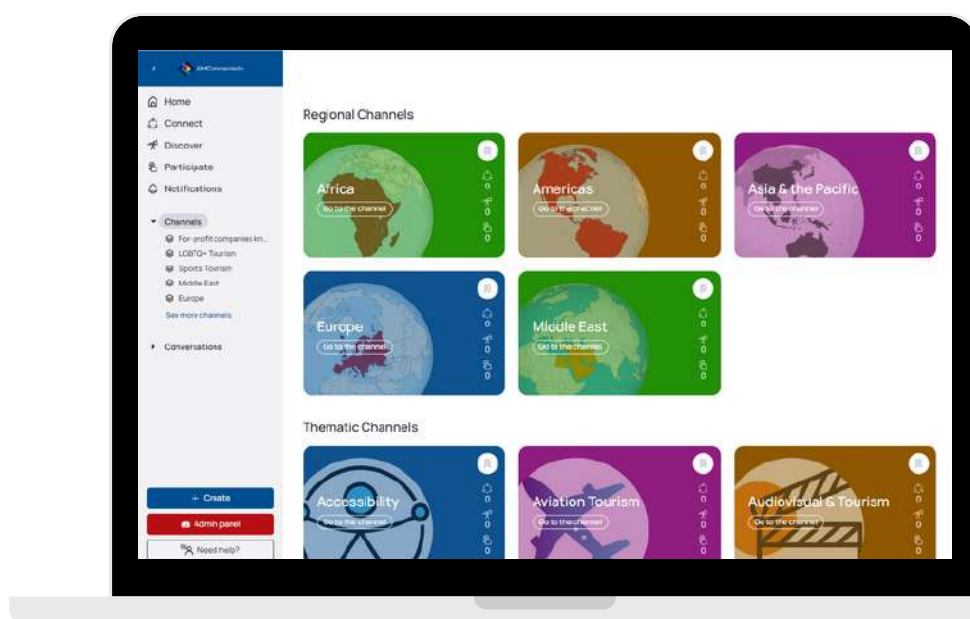
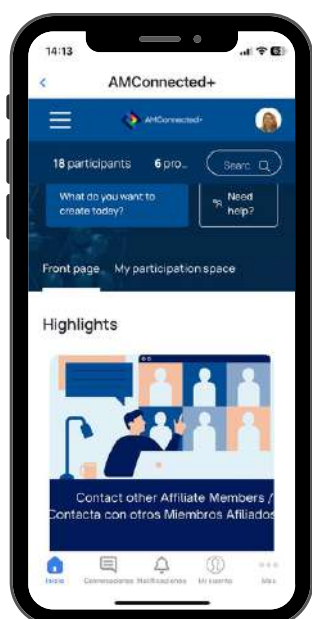
These are the main benefits of the new platform:

- **Connect Seamlessly:** Foster communication and information sharing within the Affiliate Member network.
- **Elevate Relationships:** Utilize modernized tools for effective collaboration and the establishment of new business connections.

- **Stay Informed:** Keep abreast of the latest news and events within the Organization.
- **Web & App Access:** Enjoy convenient access to AMConnected+ through your web browser and our dedicated Mobile App.
- **Enhanced Experience:** Benefit from upgraded functionalities for a more dynamic and enriching interaction.

Embark on this journey of improved communication, collaboration, and connection with AMConnected+! Access it [**HERE**](#)

For any kind of assistance regarding AMConnected+, feel free to reach out to the Affiliate Members Department at am@unwto.org



AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

WORKING MEETING OF THE BOARD OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS HELD IN THE FRAMEWORK OF WTM LONDON

Given the high number of Affiliate Members converging to London for the World Travel Market (WTM), the international fair offered the perfect context to organize a working meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members.

The meeting was held in person on 6 November, at the Tripadvisor Headquarters, courtesy of the Board Member Tripadvisor.

On this occasion, a wide range of essential topics related to the Affiliate Members' collaboration with the UNWTO and proposals to improve the overall engagement with UNWTO have been discussed.

- **Insights from the 25th UNWTO General Assembly:** review of the main decisions of the 25 GA and the 44th Affiliate Members Plenary Session. Additionally
- **Reinforcing participation in UNWTO main events/activities:** Suggestions were made to create more opportunities for concrete discussions, presentations of Affiliate Members' work, and informal exchanges of ideas.
- **The launch of AMConnected+:** The platform, to be launched in the next weeks, will provide a more interactive space to increase collaboration and communication among Affiliate Members.
- **Any Other Business (AOB):** The UNWTO financial report and an increase in Affiliate Members' fees were discussed, with explanations for the fee increase provided.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM AFFILIATE MEMBERS' ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AT SEOUL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CONFERENCE 2023

The Seoul Sustainable Tourism Congress 2023 (Seoul, Republic of Korea, 16-17 November) was preceded by a highly productive UNWTO Affiliate Members Working Session. Hosted by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, along with Affiliate Member Korea Tourism Organization, this session brought together approximately 20 affiliated entities.

The roundtable discussion revolved around crucial topics pertinent to Affiliate Membership, with a special emphasis on the Asia and the Pacific Region, to strengthen collaboration between UNWTO and Affiliate Members, enhance the promotion of UNWTO activities, analyze successful partnership models and strategies, and facilitate the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and network opportunities.

The following day, the Seoul Sustainable Tourism Conference 2023 began, organized by Affiliate Member Seoul Tourism Organization with UNWTO support, it witnessed insightful discussions and influential interventions, including the keynote speech delivered by Director Ion Vilcu, during the opening ceremony.

A key highlight was the panel discussion on "UNWTO Affiliate Members: Leading Sustainable Tourism Projects," featuring perspectives from dedicated Affiliate Members. The panel showcased valuable experiences from Mr. Daniel Martínez Rodríguez Martínez representing Comunidad de Madrid, Ms. Yusfida Khalid representing Sarawak Tourism Board, Mr. Woo Kyoung-ha representing TPO, and Prof. Professor Kaye Chon representing the School of Hotel and Tourism Management from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Among over 150 attendees converging for this Conference, Director Vilcu held bilateral meetings with several of the Affiliate Members attending, specifically with: Expedia, Sarawak Tourism Board, and Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO).

You can find more information [HERE](#)



AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

AFFILIATE MEMBERS SHOWCASE WORK ON THERMAL TOURISM AT INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

The International Congress on Thermal Tourism took place on 9-10 November in Nancy, France, organized by the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA). During this event, other Affiliate Members with expertise in the field took the stage to showcase their own work and engage in dialogue with other panelists and experts, contributing to setting standards and sharing best practices for the sustainable development of thermal tourism.

The event was opened by Mr. Ion Vilcu, Director of the Affiliate Members Department, who reflected on the need for thermal destinations to accelerate their transition to a sustainable *modus operandi*, the efforts required to create a favourable framework to encourage the private sector to play a decisive role in investing in the infrastructure and equipment needed in thermal destinations.

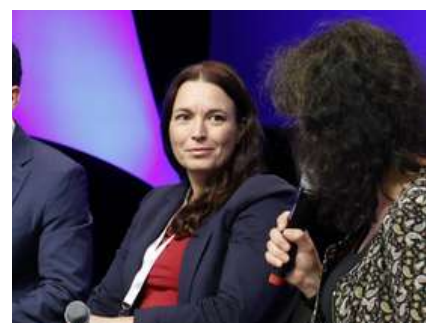
- The **Tourism Board of Kvarner**, represented by its Director, Ms. Irena Peršić Živadinov, explained how Kvarner has strategically positioned itself as a holistic health and wellness tourism destination.
- The **European Travel Commission**, represented by Mr. Miguel Gallego, was acknowledged for its campaign in promoting Europe's thermal destinations.
- **JTB Corp.**, brought to the forefront Japan's rich tradition in hot springs. Mr. Kentaro Suzuki, General Manager, Global Marketing, discussed the potential to increase Japan-Europe flow of tourists using thermal tourism.

This event served as an example of the support that UNWTO can provide to its Affiliate Members for activities and initiatives included in the Affiliate Members Department Programme of Work.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



THE
THERMAL
TOURISM
CONGRESS



AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT ATTENDS SKÅL INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AWARDS

The official announcement of the Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards winners took place during the 82nd Skål International World Congress in Málaga, Spain, on 1-5 November.

The Skål International World Congress 2023 has gathered approximately 300 travel executives from 34 countries all over the world and important authorities from Skål International, the local and regional Governments, as well as prominent personalities from the tourism industry such as Mr. Ion Vilcu, Director of Affiliate Members Department at the World Tourism Organization.

The Sustainable Tourism Awards Ceremony opened with the welcome address by Senior Vice President Annette Cardenas.

During the opening ceremony also Director Ion Vilcu gave a speech in which he expressed his gratitude to Skål International for the organization of these awards and its commitment to sustainability.

The Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards 2023 edition has been a resounding success with 68 entries from 18 countries worldwide entering eight of the available categories.

As a leading international organization in the Travel and Tourism industry, Skål International has proven to be a strong force for the initiation of change and the encouragement of environmental conservation for both Travel and Tourism progress.

As a UNWTO Affiliate Member since 1984, this event provided the perfect opportunity to recognize Skål International's 30 years of affiliation with UNWTO.

For more information click [**HERE**](#)



UNWTO HIGHLIGHTS

TOURISM EDUCATION THE FOCUS AS UNWTO HOSTS MINISTERS SUMMIT IN LONDON

UNWTO celebrated the biggest Ministers Summit on record as it brought tourism leaders together on the opening day of the World Travel Market in London to focus on education and skills development.

Welcoming a record 40 Ministers of Tourism, representing every global region and destinations of all sizes, UNWTO Executive Director Natalia Bayona underscored the vital importance of investing in education. The Summit, hosted at WTM for the 17th time, also featured input from key private sector players and co-organizer of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

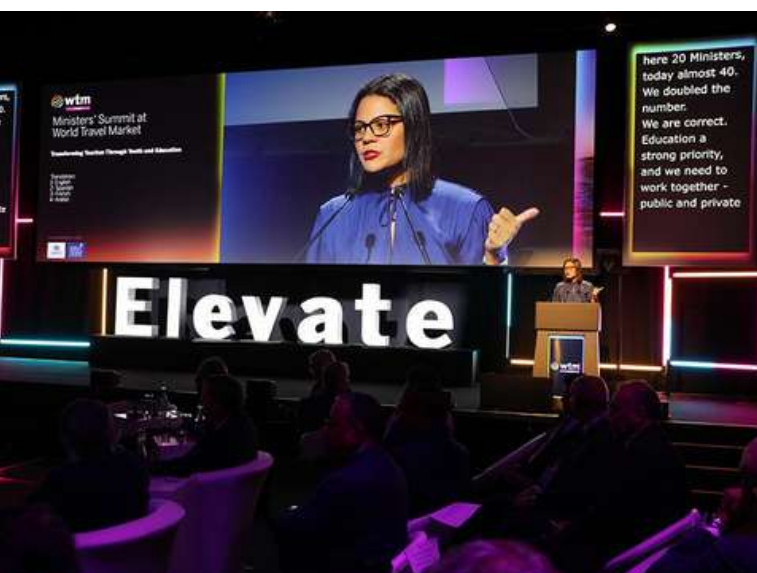
According to UNWTO with 1.2 billion people worldwide aged between 15 to 24, tourism can establish itself as a top employer of youth and driver of youth empowerment. However, according to the Office for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) around 10% of that demographic are unemployed and 14% hold only basic qualifications.

Outlining how UNWTO is leading the way in promoting tourism education, Executive Director Bayona emphasised the need to support education and skills development at every stage.

Alongside the Ministerial voices, the private sector was represented by leaders from Riyadh Air and JTB (Japan Tourism Bureau) Corp. They echoed the Ministers' focus on the importance of public-private partnerships, stressing that governments need to work with businesses to ensure training meets the needs of employers.

On the back of the expert input from tourism leaders from every global region, Ministers were able to take away key lessons from the London Summit. Chief among them was the shared nature of the challenges facing destinations everywhere, with a common need for more and better-skilled workers. Concluding, UNWTO Executive Director Natalia Bayona noted the urgent need to make tourism an aspirational sector for young people everywhere, with public-private partnerships essentially for bringing the current skills gap in the sector.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



UNWTO HIGHLIGHTS

TOURISM'S IMPORTANCE FOR GROWTH HIGHLIGHTED IN WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK REPORT

Tourism has again been identified as a key driver of economic recovery and growth in a new report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to the World Economic Outlook (WEO) Report, the global economy will grow an estimated 3.0% in 2023 and 2.9% in 2024. While this is higher than previous forecasts, it is nevertheless below the 3.5% rate of growth recorded in 2022, pointing to the continued impacts of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and from the cost-of-living crisis.

The WEO report analyses economic growth in every global region, connecting performance with key sectors, including tourism. Notably, those economies with "large travel and tourism sectors" show strong economic resilience and robust levels of economic activity.

More specifically, countries where tourism represents a high percentage of GDP have recorded faster recovery from the impacts of the pandemic in comparison to economies where tourism is not a significant sector.

As the report Foreword notes: "Strong demand for services has supported serviceoriented economies—including important tourism destinations such as France and Spain".

The latest outlook from the IMF comes on the back of UNWTO's most recent analysis of the prospects for tourism, at the global and regional levels. Pending the release of the November 2023 World Tourism Barometer, international tourism is on track to reach 80% to 95% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023. Prospects for September-December 2023 point to continued recovery, driven by the still pent-up demand and increased air connectivity particularly in Asia and the Pacific where recovery is still subdued.

You can find more information [**HERE**](#)



UNWTO HIGHLIGHTS

UNWTO WORKSHOP PUTS FOCUS ON MODERN, DYNAMIC TOURISM COMMUNICATIONS FOR AFRICA

UNWTO brought together top tourism and travel practitioners of 20 countries from across Africa to explore ways to deliver more effective tourism communications and showcase the sector's role as a pillar of development.

The first Communications, Media and Tourism Training Workshop in Africa (Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 13-15 November) recognized the heightened relevance of tourism and the current opportunity to gain greater visibility outside of the sector itself. Based on this premise, the three-day event focused on the opportunities for placing tourism in the mainstream conversation as well as the ongoing challenges facing communities, destinations and Africa as a region.

Reflecting UNWTO's collaborative approach to communications, the workshop prioritised active learning among both participants and trainers.

To gain a better understanding of why tourism matters and of how this needs to be communicated, the first day began with visits to three case studies in and around Victoria Falls:

- Tourism for Wildlife Conservation
- Tourism for Development
- Tourism for Nature

The workshop was informed by presentations from experts from UNWTO as well as from across the media spectrum (Meta, Channels TV, TraveMedia Ireland) and from top content creators. The interactive presentations again focused on the most relevant issues, including ways to place tourism in the mainstream media, harnessing the power of social media for tourism for development, working with the media, and effective communications to showcase tourism's importance for culture, heritage and communities.

Alongside exploring the solutions to growing tourism as a media topic, the workshop also focused on crisis communications, again utilizing the diverse expertise of participants and the examples of the field trips to identify ways to be more proactive and build readiness.

You can find more information [**HERE**](#)



UNWTO HIGHLIGHTS

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OBSERVATORIES ARE TRANSFORMING THE SECTOR

Members of the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO) have met to exchange insights on the importance of governance, participatory approaches and timely data in advancing sustainability in destinations.

Made up of leading destinations, members of the World Tourism Organization's INSTO network are at the forefront of work to conceive and implement sustainable development practices at the ground level. These practices, which focus on inclusivity and making decisions based on evidence, are leading to a positive shift towards tourism development that is both resilient and inclusive.

The meeting showcased the Observatories' efforts in various measurement areas such as local satisfaction levels, destination carrying capacity, and environmental and social aspects of tourism. INSTO members emphasized the challenges they face in monitoring, underscoring the importance of reliable data obtained through partnerships with diverse providers.

The INSTO network continues to expand, welcoming four new Observatories during this week's meeting: Gifu Prefecture in Japan, Cali in the Valle de Cauca in Colombia, the Centro de Portugal, and the Atlantic Coast of Ireland. These destinations have demonstrated their work towards sustainable tourism through participatory approaches, evidence generation and transparency - essential requirements for INSTO membership. Additionally, three members have joined since the beginning of 2023: Yucatan and Tlaxcala in Mexico and the Monitoring Centre from the Batanes Islands in the Philippines, bringing the total INSTO membership to 42.

All INSTO members are committed to assessing the impact of tourism in 11 mandatory areas spanning economic, environmental and socio-economic dimensions. This commitment aligns with the new Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) framework UNWTO is developing, which goes beyond broad indicators such as GDP.

You can find more information [**HERE**](#)



UNWTO HIGHLIGHTS

GROWING WINE TOURISM FOR INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism has been held for the first time in La Rioja, one of the world's leading wine tourism destinations, with the focus placed firmly on inclusion and sustainability for local communities and territories.

Paving the way towards inclusive growth, especially in rural areas, requires clear policies and a commitment to embracing digital transformation and innovation. Recognizing this, the Conference brought together key stakeholders and leaders from across the growing wine tourism sector to address priorities including education, skills development and the effective use of data.

The 7th edition of the UNWTO conference welcomed thought-leaders from both emerging and established wine destinations, including Argentina, Armenia, Chile, France, Germany, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, and the United States of America. As well as celebrating the growing interest in wine tourism, the event made clear the challenges for building more competitive destinations and transforming demand into economic growth and social inclusion.

Over two days, workshops and masterclasses focused on:

- Skills development and a better understanding of the impacts and trends of wine tourism were identified as crucial elements to create value and promote wine regions, ultimately enhancing their competitiveness.
- With the impact of climate change affecting the sector, experts debated how to progress sustainability in wine tourism as well and progress digitalization for better processes. Participants discussed the need to harmonise data collection, the use of new data sources and innovative strategies for expanding new products, outreach on social media, utilizing cutting-edge digital tools, and leveraging new technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, to create knowledge and a seamless experience.

During the closing ceremony, La Rioja handed over the symbolic amphora to Armenia, marking the country's status as the next host for the 8th UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism in 2024.

You can find more information [**HERE**](#)



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

CITYDNA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024: REALITY CHECK!

Scheduled from April 24-27, 2024, the CityDNA International Conference & General Assembly 2024 promises a dynamic exploration of the realities shaping our cities. This event will go beyond the ordinary conference setting, aiming to challenge norms and unravel the dominant complexities of the tourism industry.

The main theme, REALITY CHECK, will extensively examine the complex workings of tourism. There will be in-depth sessions dissecting revenue streams, business models, and the consequential impacts within our industry. Various segments, such as Checks and Balances on DMO/CVB revenue and Pulse Checks on emerging trends, will be explored, offering critical insights into the evolving landscape of tourism.

Beyond the primary theme, the conference will explore various aspects. Safety Check will focus on the intersection of tourism and safe cities, while Raincheck will emphasize community engagement. MICE Innovation Check will offer a glimpse into the future of meetings and conferences.

The diverse array of topics, ranging from Greenwashing frameworks to joint projects, aims to engage and offer a platform for members to share their expertise and insights.

Driven by our community's needs and interests, sessions will be curated on the future tourist, challenges of mobility and carbon emissions, and the ongoing clash between capitalism and sustainable/regenerative travel.

This event will be a collaborative journey diving deep into urban development, ethical destination management, and sustainable practices. REALITY CHECK will ignite transformative discussions and foster meaningful connections in Bologna, April 24-27, 2024.

If you have something of interest to share at City Destinations Alliance International Conference, the Call for Speakers will open next week: citydestinationsalliance.eu

**CITY
DESTINATIONS
ALLIANCE**



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

CITY SCAN PAVES THE WAY FOR BRUGES' NEW TOURISM STRATEGY

In the heart of Europe lies the charming city of Bruges, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its medieval streets and intricate canal networks. While Bruges has long captivated international visitors, recent shifts in tourism post-COVID-19 have beckoned a strategic reevaluation.

Eager to meet the evolving needs of both its residents and tourists, Visit Bruges recently collaborated with TOPOSOPHY to conduct a comprehensive City Scan. This initiative aimed to holistically assess visitor experiences and management to fine-tune Bruges' upcoming tourism strategy set for 2024.

The City Scan was no ordinary assessment. Visit Bruges and TOPOSOPHY brought together experienced professionals from diverse European cities for this task. Among the invited peers, we were delighted to count on the support of Dieter Hardt-Stremayr, CEO of Graz Tourismus, Maya Janssen, Managing Director Insights & Marketing Strategy at amsterdam&partners,

Clemens Költringer, Marketing Analyst, Strategic Destination Development at the Vienna Tourist Board, Inge Krogh Larsen, Changemaker with the Global Destination Sustainability Movement and Jurgen Moors, CEO of Maastricht Convention Bureau. These specialists identified key areas of focus, such as visitor distribution, group management, and the city's dedication to sustainability.

This City Scan offers more than just insights for Bruges. Many historic cities across Europe, sharing Bruges' beauty and challenges, eagerly await the results. The outcome promises to shape strategies that not only uphold authenticity and allure but also tackle the anticipated challenges that the city is likely to face in the next decade.

Follow this area as Visit Bruges is set to reveal the detailed findings and the new tourism strategy in early 2024. This strategic pivot promises a harmonious blend of preserving heritage while adapting to the new realities of global tourism.

TOPOSOPHY
PLACE MAKING & MARKETING AGENCY



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

CROATIA FORECASTS A 10% GROWTH IN TOURISM FOR THIS LOW SEASON

The country expects to see a 10% increase in tourism during the upcoming low season. Compared to last year, Croatia anticipates higher tourism activity during the autumn and winter months, with specific months showing an increase of more than 20% according to the Travel Intelligence analysis presented by Mabrian Technologies.

One of the main takeaways from Mabrian's analysis is the promising outlook for Croatia in the coming months. It forecasts a 10% increase in tourism from September to March 24, compared to last year. In terms of growth, Croatia is expected to outperform Italy and Turkey during these months, although it has not yet reached the levels seen in Greece. Croatia still has room for improvement during the considered low season months. When compared to the context and its closest competitors, the data indicates that the Southeast Mediterranean region is 9 percentage points more seasonal than the average in the nearby Mediterranean, while Croatia is 16% more seasonal.

According to the [latest global travellers' motivations study](#) conducted by Mabrian, there is a consistent growth in experiential motivations for travel, surpassing more conventional motivations. Analysis of travellers sentiment and preferences, based on over 400 million interactions on social media, reveals that interests in Active, Natural, Wellness, and Gastronomy experiences are gaining importance over Sunbathing, Family Travel, Shopping, and Nightlife. This positions Croatia with a great opportunity to solidify its leadership in Nature and Active tourism products during the low season, compared to Mediterranean competitors. Additionally, there is an interesting opportunity to further develop Gastronomy and Culture-related activities, which were among the main travellers interests from October to March during the Autumn-Winter 2022-2023 season.

Find the [full report here](#).

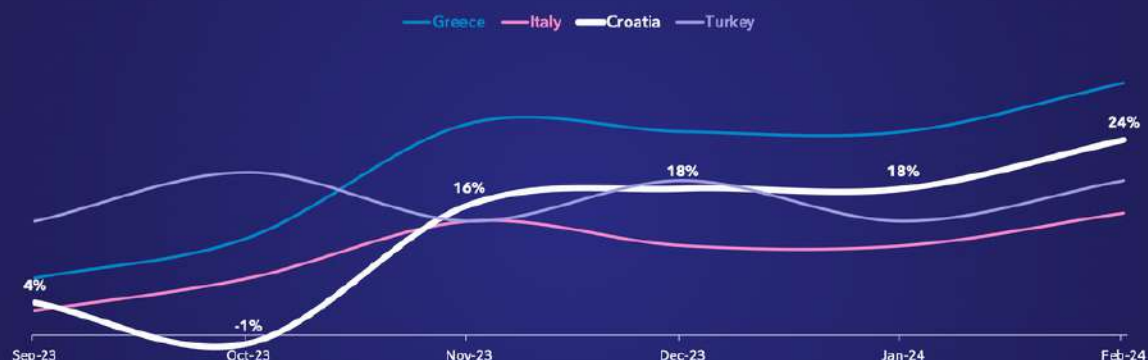


MABRIAN
BIG DATA FOR TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE

Low season opportunities for Croatia and the Mediterranean



Off-season tourism forecast: activity share 23 vs 22



10% AVERAGE GROWTH IN CROATIA

Source: Mabrian Technologies via air connectivity & activity data.

AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

HTMI SAUDI ARABIA CULINARY EXCELLENCE TRAINING PROGRAM (PRO CHEF): GEAR UP FOR THRILLING HORECA COMPETITIONS, NOVEMBER 27-29, 2023

Committed to proactive initiatives, HTMI provides an annual on-campus mini-training program for its students, focusing on equipping them with skills for success in the highly competitive realm of culinary arts, with a particular focus on the prestigious HORECA event, which is a pivotal exhibition held in Riyadh, as part of the broader HORECA Exhibitions series, gathering local and international hotel, gastronomy, and beverage professionals and offering numerous highlights, including a spectrum of culinary competitions.

Acknowledging the multifaceted requirements of HORECA competitions, HTMI has developed a comprehensive training program surpassing traditional instruction. Understanding from experience that triumph in culinary competitions hinges on a blend of technical skills, creativity, and adaptability, HTMI has devised a demo training program in a simulated HORECA setting. Campus kitchens become dynamic hubs for workshops, enhancing students' techniques, teamwork, time-management, and precision - essential skills for high-stakes contests.

And because HTMI philosophy emphasizes chefs excelling not just in culinary skills but also in crafting unforgettable dining experiences, the program includes workshops on menu formulation and presentation, guiding students in creating visually stunning dishes. Industry professionals and accomplished alumni actively contribute to the program, sharing insights on HORECA landscape, thus enriching students' understanding of the ins and outs. Additionally, students engage in mock competitions, encountering real-world scenarios that demand creative thinking and flexibility, and receiving constructive feedback from instructors and guest chefs.

Simulating HORECA competitions not only prepares the students for the intensity of competitions, but also nurtures their resilience and adaptability - qualities that are indispensable in fast-paced culinary careers. HTMI is dedicated to cultivating a new generation of proficient chefs but also innovative and resilient in the face of the industry's challenges as they pursue their culinary journeys. HTMI's Culinary Excellence Program asserts its commitment to shaping future leaders in the highly competitive culinary arts industry.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

LONELY PLANET RANKS CROATIA IN TOP 10 COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD FOR 2024

Great news for Croatia from Lonely Planet, one of the leading global travel platforms and specialised media for travel.

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary, Lonely Planet has published a list of the 50 best global destinations across five categories, with Croatia securing its place in the category of the top 10 countries to visit next year.

“Lonely Planet’s choice confirms Croatia’s status as one of the highest quality, and simultaneously most beautiful, global countries, whose global visibility is increasingly significant. Its natural heritage, rich culture, the friendliness of its people, as well as strong drivers of progress in various aspects of tourism, are the cornerstone of our offer, which is becoming more and more recognisable throughout the year. I believe that our numerous guests have already been convinced of the attractiveness of the Croatian tourist offer and the dedication of the entire Croatian tourism sector, while those in the future will be convinced,”

emphasised Kristijan Staničić, Director of the Croatian National Tourist Board, stressing the importance of sustainability in development, as well as the promotion of sustainable tourism, as we are witnessing an increasing number of travellers following ecological trends.

Lonely Planet described Croatia as a country with a beautiful sun-drenched coastline, numerous islands, challenging mountains, and historic cities. The description also highlighted Croatia’s entry into the Schengen area, the opening of the Pelješac Bridge, and other infrastructure projects, all of which are just some of the synonyms for Croatia, which have placed it among the best countries in the world.

It is worth mentioning that alongside Croatia, countries such as Mongolia, India, Morocco, Chile, Mexico, and others have also secured their place on the list.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

SKÅL INTERNATIONAL 22ND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AWARDS

Skål International 22nd Sustainable Tourism Awards were announced on 2 November 2023 during the Opening Ceremony of the 82nd Skål International World Congress, conducted by Senior Vice President Annette Cardenas in Malaga, Spain.

As a leading international organisation in the Travel and Tourism industry, Skål International has proven to be a strong force for the initiation of change and the encouragement of environmental conservation and sustainable development for both Travel and Tourism progress. As an Affiliate Member of the UNWTO since 1984, whose mission is to promote reliable, sustainable, and universally accessible Tourism, Skål International launched the Sustainable Tourism Awards following the United Nations declaration of 2002 as the year of Ecotourism and Mountains, to acknowledge and spotlight Companies, Institutions and Governments' best practices globally.

Skål International is honored with the support of UNWTO in the frame of the Sustainable Tourism Awards and with the attendance of Mr. Ion Vilcu, Director of Affiliate Members, at the ceremony who also took the opportunity to present together with Mrs Hulya Aslantas, representative of Skål International at UNWTO, the 30 years recognition award of UNWTO to President Juan Steta.

The Sustainable Tourism Awards 2023 edition has been a resounding success with 68 entries from 18 countries worldwide. More information about the program and winners can be found [HERE](#).

Skål International is thankful to UNWTO for their support in sharing this information with all their Members who are welcome to learn and further explore these best practices towards a more sustainable future.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

EXHIBITION WORLD BAHRAIN SECURES "WORLD'S LEADING NEW EXHIBITION AND CONVENTION CENTRE 2023" AWARD AT WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS 2023

Exhibition World Bahrain is proud to announce securing the "World's Leading New Exhibition and Convention Centre 2023" at the World Travel Awards 2023.

The award accolade was presented to Dr. Nasser Qaedi, the CEO of Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority (BTEA), during the World Travel Awards 2023 Grand Final Gala Ceremony, which took place at Burj Al Arab in Dubai, UAE, on December 1, 2023.

Exhibition World Bahrain captured the highest number of votes, clinching the internationally recognised award from Bharat Mandapam, India, and Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition centre, New Zealand.

With this unrivalled win, the Kingdom of Bahrain has further cemented its reputation as the leading global hub for the MICE industry due to Exhibition World Bahrain's versatility, with its ultramodern amenities and innovative services that cater to all types of events.

Winning the "World's Leading New Exhibition and Convention Centre 2023" award coincides with EWB's 1st anniversary and celebrates a remarkable set of milestones. The venue is a sought-after destination for prestigious events, having hosted a diverse range, including large-scale exhibitions, conventions, conferences, congresses, grand weddings, live concerts, product launches, seminars and much more.



AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

CNC PRE-LAUNCHS TOURISM COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE DASHBOARD

The National Confederation of Commerce of Goods, Services and Tourism has recently held the pre-launch of Tourism Competitive Intelligence Dashboard, a tool that brings information and data on the sector, besides monitoring projects and public policies in Brazilian states.

One of the objectives of the Vai Turismo Dash is to show that the Tourism is an economic and social development vector through data. The idea is to support the Tourism development and demonstrate the importance of this activity for the economic growth and for the generation of employment and income.

The tool will allow the visualization of revenues volume, arrivals, nationality and classification of tourists, collection, paid passengers X number of seats, flights origin, airlines companies that serve the destination, federal highways revenues,

as well as demonstrating the tourist interest in certain destination/attraction. It will also be possible to check socioeconomic indicators and data on the Gross Domestic Product, human development, labor statistics, training for Tourism, among others.

In addition, the Dash will enable to monitor Tourism projects and public policies, making available the quantity of projects focused in Tourism at national and state level and the status in which they are, in addition to a database on all the registered projects. The purpose is to identify opportunities of improvements, partnerships and public policies cases for the sector, and not to carry out any kind of oversight.





The UNWTO Affiliate Members Department is responsible for the management of the partnership between UNWTO and the private sector.

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