THE 6TH UNWTO ASIA/PACIFIC EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAM
ON STRATEGIC TOURISM PLANNING

25th-28th June 2012 Bhutan

Technical Note

1. Background
The UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Program on Tourism Policy and Strategy was first held in 2006. Through a series of lectures, group discussions, debates, and presentations, the training program seeks to provide a forum to assist public and private sector tourism executives in gaining a better understanding of the latest trends in tourism management and provide a knowledge and experience-sharing platform on best practices in successful policy and strategy formulation and implementation. The training program enables participants to improve their strategic tourism management skills and, through the network of contacts, further develop these skills going forward.

2. Context
The tourism industry experienced further growth in 2011, with total global arrivals increasing to 980 million, up from 939 million in 2010. The pace of annual growth did, however, slowdown from around 6.5% for 2009/10, to around 4.4% for 2010/11. Europe experienced the greatest growth, with arrivals up by around 6% closely followed by Asia-Pacific’s 5.6% growth. Despite growth in the Asia Pacific region – with arrivals increasing from 204.6 million in 2010 to 216 million in 2011 – the annual growth rate was down by more than half from a 2009/10 high of 12.9%. Within the region itself, South-East Asia and South Asia lead the pack with growth rates of 9.2% and 8.9% respectively. Some countries report a decline in arrivals from long haul markets such as Europe and growth in regional arrivals. North-East Asia continues to lead the field with over 115 million arrivals in 2011. Looking to the future, the UNWTO barometer forecasts continued growth of around 3-4% in global arrivals – and for Asia Pacific to enjoy the highest regional growth, with an increase in arrivals of around 4-6%.

Outcomes from the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 will further shape the global economic outlook and identify specific measures governments and business, including the tourism industry, must take to avoid irreversible damage and the potentially catastrophic consequences of climate change1. With Bhutan hosting this year’s training it is worth noting that in 2011 the Bhutanese policy and concept of Gross National Happiness was adopted by the UN General Assembly (resolution A/65/L.86) and has become the 9th Millennium Development Goal.

In setting out policies and programmes to encourage industry growth it is essential that governments and business (indeed all industry stakeholders) do everything within their power to plan strategically to facilitate sustainable forms of tourism development and to promote models and practices that help the

1 A compelling and highly recommended overview of the current status of the climate change threat is provided in this 6 minute UK Government Department for International Development podcast interview with a leading climate change expert
local communities in employment creation and poverty reduction while mitigating environmental impacts. It is in this vein that strategic tourism planning has been chosen as the key theme for this year’s training – and, under this theme, indicators for sustainable development for tourism destinations and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria are given particular attention.

In 1994 UNWTO published Guidebook on Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations. At present, UNWTO is working on setting up a global network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories to promote the use of indicators in policy-making and planning processes at the national and local destination levels. Meanwhile the GSTC is a global initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world and is currently active in all UNWTO regions.

The training program will provide participants with an overview of these initiatives and, using examples from each member country and beyond, discuss steps being taken to embed and advance these agendas. Special consideration will be given to how this is being done in the context of strategic tourism planning at the national level and to develop and promote flagship destinations. The training will discuss, for example:

- the challenges of using and applying indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations, including building the capacity of provincial and district governments and other stakeholders;
- lessons from case studies of sites and destinations where benchmarks and indicators are being applied;
- government planning and management priorities for flagship destinations;
- working with the private sector to encourage investment in responsible and sustainable tourism as well as the take up of GSTC Criteria; and,
- using indicators and GSTC Criteria in the branding and marketing of destinations.

3. Training Program Objectives

This program is specifically designed to support tourism policy makers and managers. It aims to strengthen effective and responsive policies and strategies that in turn must adapt to changing priorities and concerns at the national and destination levels.

Overall objectives of the training program are to:

1. Deepen participants’ understanding of:
   (i) the important role that tourism can play in contributing to socio-economic development at the country and destination levels focusing on the MDGs of poverty reduction and private sector participation;
   (ii) how to manage rapid tourism growth so that it is more sustainable and responsive to safeguarding natural and cultural heritage; and,
   (iii) how to optimise the benefits of regional and sub-regional cooperation in the development of international tourism.

2. Share successful tourism policies and practices of UNWTO’s Asia Pacific member countries regarding policy-making and implementation.

3. Provide insights to broaden and strengthen tourism policy-making and strategic planning at the regional, sub-regional, national and destination levels, especially south-south cooperation.
4. **Provisional Program**
The training will be divided into three themed sessions. Each session will commence with a lead presentation and be followed by a series of presentations from participating countries with moderated discussion centred around the main theme.

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<th>PROVISIONAL Program</th>
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| 24/June (SUN) | Arrival and Check-in  
|             | Welcoming Cocktail Reception (UNWTO)                                                |
| 25/June (MON) | Opening Ceremony                                                                   |
|             | **Session 1  Key Considerations for Strategic Tourism Planning at the National Level**  
|             | Speaker: Dr Paul Rogers, UNWTO Consultant                                           |
|             | Welcome Dinner (Host Member State)                                                  |
| 26/June (TUE) | **Session 2  Strategic Tourism Planning for flagship Sites and Destinations – what are the key considerations?**  
|             | Speaker: Mr Ludwig G. Rieder, Asia Pacific Projects, Inc.                           |
| 27/June (WED) | Technical Tour                                                                      |
| 28/June (THU) | **Session 3  Tourism Observatories and Strategic Tourism Planning in China**  
|             | Speaker: Prof. Bao Jigang, Dean of School of Tourism Management, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China |
|             | Closing Ceremony                                                                    
|             | Farewell Dinner (Host Member State)                                                  |
| 29/June (FRI) | Check-out and Departure                                                            |

5. **Participant Involvement**
Participants should be at least senior director level from the national tourism administrations and have an excellent command of English.

In order to increase participation levels, and to have a useful and practical learning experience, each participant is required to prepare a short presentation on issues and best practices associated with one of the sessions described above. This should be done with special reference to planning and management issues and approaches prevailing in their own country. *To ensure a representative spread of presentations in the training, Dr Paul Rogers, UNWTO’s anchor consultant for the training program, will contact country representatives nominated to join the program to: a) discuss and agree the focus of country presentations; and b) finalise the training program agenda*. Any topics or issues centred around the sessions and questions highlighted above would be welcome to include in country presentations, this might embrace, for example:

- putting local communities at the heart of the destination;
- working with the private sector to attract investment and carry forward sustainable tourism
planning principles;
- sharing planning responsibilities between the centre and local governments;
- strengthening local management capacity;
- interpretation and visitor management;
- branding and marketing;
- issues and challenges surrounding certification to encourage best practice and responsible tourism by the private sector;
- selecting indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations; and,
- measuring tourism impacts and benefits to ensure wide distribution of benefits.

Recommendations must be included in the presentations for other participants to obtain practical lessons from each case study of our member states. Presentation files should be submitted to UNWTO not later than 31st May 2012.

All the presentation files will be distributed to participants in advance of the training to facilitate efficient discussion.