



# 1st UNWTO Regional Conference on Tourism Partnerships

## *Future Tourism for Asia and the Pacific*

1 – 2 June 2013

Seoul, Republic of Korea

## Technical Note

### 1. Background

In 2012 international tourism arrivals in Asia and the Pacific grew by 7% to 233 million. South-East Asia was the best performing region with arrivals up by 9%. Recent UNWTO forecasts predict that by 2030 Asia and the Pacific will receive 30% of all international arrivals, up from 22% in 2010. Over the same period outbound tourism from Asia and the Pacific is forecast to grow from 4% of global outbound tourism to 17%.

Responding to growth of this magnitude will require significant investment in infrastructure and human resources, generate a large number of new jobs, enhance export revenue and require the building of new consumer focused IT (Information Technology) platforms. It will also place additional pressure on natural and built environments. The challenge for all nations in the region is to adopt an approach to tourism development that is sustainable, innovative and able to capture the attention of the consumer via new web based technologies.

Achieving the projected increase in arrivals by 2030 will also require an on-going willingness of the private and public sectors to engage in effective partnerships based on trust and reciprocity at both national and regional levels. Success will also require an unparalleled linking of smart tourism with responsible tourism to achieve policy settings able to promote long term sustainability on a regional scale.

Growing investment in high speed digital telecommunications networks allied with the rapid uptake of smart phone technology by increasingly travel conscious consumers has created ideal conditions for destinations in the Asia and Pacific to directly influence consumer's travel purchase decisions. Nations able to develop sustainable tourism products and services and utilize IT platforms to gain direct access to consumers will gain a significant competitive advantage over their competitors within the region and globally.

Rapid growth is not however without danger and the need to balance growth with long term sustainability must be an important consideration for policy makers and the private sector. The UNWTO's *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* provides an excellent platform for benchmarking national tourism policy and importantly informing the private sector on strategies for responding to investment opportunities particular in sensitive urban and natural areas.

## **II. Objectives**

The main objective of the conference is to create a platform for participants in the private and public sectors to engage in dialogue and shared-vision on how to advance tourism in the context of a technology-driven world using development strategies that are both ethical and sustainable. The conference will:

- a) Debate issues such as how smart tourism can be the driver to form strategic alliances for cooperative action among the various stakeholders;
- b) Discuss how alliances of this nature can assist stakeholders to leverage innovation to increase their competitiveness in the global tourism market; and
- c) Examine how ethical issues that underpin responsible tourism can help to make a difference in terms of brand perception and sustainability.

## **III. Issues to be covered**

### *1. Smart Tourism*

Recent developments in Information Technology including the introduction of Web 2.0, the rapid adoption of smart phones by consumers and introduction of powerful social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and You Tube, have led to a convergence of technologies that offer Destination Marketing Organization's (DMOs) an unparalleled opportunity to reach customers. These developments also offer destinations the opportunity to maximize marketing budgets, facilitate strategies that empower tourists to co-create value with service and product providers and develop new transnational opportunities to attract IT savvy tourists. Developing a strong online presence has become a necessity for destinations striving to remain competitive into the future. The conference will examine how developments in smart tourism may be used to build new innovative and competitive tourism experiences within a framework that promotes private - public sector partnerships and long term sustainability.

### *2. Responsible Tourism*

The long term sustainability of tourism requires strategies that maximize the benefits of tourism for host communities while minimizing potential negative impacts. In an era of rapid growth in demand, particularly for experiences in sensitive natural areas, care needs to be exercised to ensure that both the tourist and the host community gain maximum benefit from tourism development. The UNWTO's core policy document, the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* provides a roadmap to all tourism stakeholders for developing tourism experiences that are ethical, responsible and sustainable. The conference will discuss this issue with particular attention to how new developments in smart tourism can be harnessed to promote long term sustainable outcomes for Asia and the Pacific's tourism industry.

## **IV. Participants**

- National Tourism Administrations and local governments
- Tourism Industries (tour operators, hotels, transport services, telecommunications, financial bodies, consultancy firms, etc)
- Academics from research institutes and universities.

## **V. Languages**

The Conference will be conducted in English and Korean. Simultaneous translation will be available.

## **VI. Provisional Programme**

As attached.