



Iranian Cultural Heritage
Handicrafts & Tourism Organization

6th UNWTO Silk Road Task Force Meeting

Urmia, Islamic Republic of Iran - Ana International Hotel - 22-25 April 2016

Provisional Programme

English-Russian simultaneous interpretation will be provided

Meeting jointly organised by UNWTO and the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO)

Friday, 22 April

Task Force members to arrive in Urmia. Transfers from the International Airport of Tabriz will be provided.

Day I: Saturday, 23 April

The Opening ceremony takes place in First Floor, Hall M1

OFFICIAL OPENING	
10.00-10.15	Welcoming Remarks by Mr. Zoltan Somogyi, UNWTO Executive Director
10.15-10.25	Welcoming Remarks by Mr. Ghorban Ali Saadat, West Azerbaijan Governor including screening of West Azerbaijan province promotional video
10.25-10.40	UNWTO Silk Road Programme Update by Ms. Alla Peressolova, Head of UNWTO Silk Road Programme
10.40-10.45	Official Welcoming by Mr. Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary-General (via video message)
10.45-11:00	Welcoming Remarks by H.E. Dr. Soltanifar, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and President of ICHTO

11.00-11.30 *Networking break and group photo with Vice-President*

The technical workshops will all take place in the Meeting room located in B1 Hall C

WORKSHOP 1: MARKETING AND PROMOTION	
<p><i>Moderated by Ms. Johanna Devine, Technical Coordinator, UNWTO Silk Road Programme</i></p> <p>In 2015, Forbes described the Silk Road as ‘one of the world’s most powerful brands, perhaps even bigger than Disney or Coca-Cola’. As a brand, the Silk Road has a significant and strong foundation to build upon. UNWTO research has shown that the Silk Road is one of the world’s most discussed travel routes online. Consistent marketing messages are required to enhance the brand image of the Silk Road and improve the efficiency of all marketing and promotion efforts.</p>	
11.30-11.45	<p>Marketing and Promoting the Silk Road: Success Stories and Challenges by Ms. Johanna Devine, Technical Coordinator, UNWTO Silk Road Programme</p> <p>Over the last 6 years, UNWTO has been working with a growing number of Member States on joint marketing initiatives to raise the profile of the Silk Road to consumers and trade alike. This presentation will provide an overview of some of the major promotional activities that have been successfully implemented in the past, as well as key opportunities for the future. It will also look at some of the major challenges that the Silk Road faces with regards to branding and promotion.</p>
11.45-12.00	<p>Marketing and Promoting the Silk Road in Iran by Mr. Morteza Rahmani Movahed, Tourism Deputy of ICHTO</p>
12.00-12.30	<p>Understanding and Engaging New and Traditional Media in Tourism by Mr. John Bell, UNWTO Media and Communications Consultant</p> <p>The world of media is changing rapidly and it can be difficult for destinations to keep up. In a digital age, should we now be focusing purely on social media? Which types of traditional media are worth hanging on to? And can we really trust bloggers to get the word out? These questions and more will be addressed in this presentation that will look at the growing shifts in media and how destinations can get the most return on investment for their marketing dollar.</p>
12.30-12.40	<p>TripAdvisor Silk Road Trends Presentation (via video) by Ms. Helena Egan, Global Director of Industry Relations, TripAdvisor</p> <p>TripAdvisor is one of the world's largest travel sites, operating in 48 countries worldwide. TripAdvisor's branded sites make up the largest travel community in the world, reaching 350 million unique monthly visitors, and 320 million reviews and opinions covering more than 6.2 million accommodations, restaurants and attractions. In 2015, TripAdvisor became an Affiliate Member of UNWTO, and has since become an important market trends and research partner for the UNWTO Silk Road Programme. This presentation will share the 1st edition of the <i>TripAdvisor Travel Trends for the Silk Road 2016</i>, and will reveal insights on the Silk Road, based on a consumer survey of over 10,000 TripAdvisor travellers.</p>
12.40-13.30	<p>Roundtable discussion:</p> <p>Task Force Members will discuss key issues relating to marketing and promoting the Silk Road, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are destinations currently using the Silk Road for branding and promotion? • How can destinations work more effectively together in marketing and promoting the Silk Road? • What should be the priorities for 2016/2017?
13.30-15.00	<p><i>Lunch</i></p>

WORKSHOP 2: TRAVEL FACILITATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Moderated by Mr. John Bell, UNWTO Media and Communications Consultant

While the Silk Road continues to be a hub for commerce and travel, barriers such as inefficient and outdated visa policies, border crossing procedures and customs regulations continue to hinder tourism growth in the region. There are extensive opportunities for enhancing connectivity by air, rail and sea along the Silk Road that will bring increase international arrivals, stimulate job creation and enhance economic development.

15.00-15.30	<p><i>The Silk Road by Air: The Role of Turkish Airlines in Connecting the Silk Road</i> by Mr. Yavuz Akkaynak, General Manager, Turkish Airlines Tabriz Office, Iran</p> <p>Turkish Airlines flies to more countries than any other airline in the world, and is one of the major airlines connecting the Silk Road. Turkish Airlines now flies to 285 international destinations in 113 countries, and in 2015 carried 61.2 million passengers. Istanbul Ataturk Airport is a major Silk Road hub, and was the 3rd busiest airport in Europe in 2015. Turkish Airlines has won a number of international awards including being voted Europe's best airline by Skytrax five years consecutively.</p> <p>This presentation will look at Turkish Airline's global strategy and opportunities for Silk Road destinations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected growth for Turkish Airlines and route expansion • Public-private partnerships and Turkey's e-visa • Touristanbul program – free guided tours for Turkish Airlines passengers stopping over in Istanbul for 6-24 hours • Turkish Airlines' marketing campaigns to inspire global travel, such as the <i>Widen Your World</i> campaign
15.30-16.15	<p>Roundtable Discussion on Travel Facilitation:</p> <p>This session will enable Task Force representatives to report on improvements to visa policies (visas on arrival, evisas, etc.), aviation growth and route development and border crossing management in their countries over the last 12 months. The discussion will also look at immediate steps that can be taken to make crossing Silk Road borders more convenient and efficient.</p>
16.15-16.30	<p><i>World Expo Astana 2017: Opportunities for the Silk Road</i> by Saule Bulebayeva, Marketing and promotion department, Astana EXPO 2017</p>
16.30-16.45	<p>Wrap up and Conclusions Day 1 by Ms. Alla Peressolova, UNWTO Silk Road Programme Manager</p>
17.00-20.00	<p><i>Free time at leisure</i></p>
20.00	<p><i>Dinner hosted by West Azerbaijan Governor</i></p>

Day II: Sunday, 24 April

WORKSHOP 3: WORKSHOP ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Moderated by Ms. Allia Peressolova, UNWTO Silk Road Programme Manager

The Silk Road has an extensive array of outstanding cultural and natural heritage. The first Silk Road Heritage Corridor was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2014, and additional heritage corridors and tourism route projects are being developed across the Silk Road and beyond. Effective destination management strategies foster economic growth, help safeguard local arts and culture, diversify business and reduce seasonality. Training and capacity building has an important role to play in terms of enhancing service delivery, improving product quality, boosting productivity and increasing profitability.

9.00-9.30	<p><i>Planning for Tourism and Heritage Development on the Silk Road by Ms Muhayyo Makhmudova, Programme Officer in Culture, UNESCO Tashkent Office</i></p> <p>Both culture and tourism stakeholders share responsibility for the conservation of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value and for sustainable development through appropriate tourism management. This presentation will look at the role of UNESCO in training and cultural heritage management and how stakeholders can work together to create new opportunities for tourism and heritage development. It will also provide an overview of the some of the related activities UNESCO is carrying out in Central Asia and Iran.</p>
9.30-9.50	<p><i>Reviving the Silk Road's heritage and historical monuments through joint investment and cooperation</i> by Mr. Nosratollah Tajik, Member of Board of Directors of The Fund For Revival and Utilization of Cultural and Historic Building and Places</p>
9.50-10.10	<p><i>Offering a Quality Visitor Experience through Tourist Guide Training</i> by Mr Mohsen Hajisaeid, Vice-President of Iran Federation of Tourist Guide Association</p> <p>The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) is an international network of over 200,000 professional tourist guides from more than 70 countries. WFTGA is the only global forum for tourist guides and has developed training programmes to enhance the standards of guiding around the world. The next edition of the WFTGA Convention is planned to be held in 2017 in Iran. This presentation will look at the importance of high standards in tourist guiding and will discuss the measures that can be taken to improve the visitor experience in this area. It will also showcase the Silk Road Heritage Guides project that was implemented in Khiva, Uzbekistan in 2015, and is planned to be replicated across other parts of the Silk Road.</p>
9.50-10.30	<p>Roundtable discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which major initiatives are destinations currently implementing to safeguard and promote heritage sites?• Which destination management planning models are most effective for Silk Road countries?• What are the simple steps that can be taken by all Member States to improve the visitor experience?
10.30-11.00	<p><i>Networking Break</i></p>

WORKSHOP 4: STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION ON THE SILK ROAD	
11.00-13.00	<p>Implementing Successful Quality Standards Certification Programs in Tourism by Ms. Maria Cruz Cadiz Gomez, Technical Manager, Spanish Institute for Quality Tourism</p> <p>The Silk Road is certainly a powerful brand, but is this enough not to attract tourists and ensure their loyalty? Are destination management organizations on the Silk Road ready to welcome tourists with a high level of customer service? This presentation will look at how DMOs can improve their approach to standards. Over the last few years, there has been significant improvement in quality standards and this presentation will share insight into the tools that can help tourism SMEs offer improved services and professionalism. It will show what is needed to transform a destination...into a quality destination.</p>
13.00-14.30	<i>Lunch</i>
FINAL SESSION: WRAP UP AND PLANNING FOR 2016/2017	
14.30-15.30	<p>Final Conclusions, Summary and Priorities for 2016/2017 by Ms. Johanna Devine, Technical Coordinator, UNWTO Silk Road Programme with Mr. John Bell, UNWTO Media and Communications Consultant</p>
16.30-19.30	Visit to local markets and bazaar
20.00	<i>Dinner</i>

Day III: Monday, 25 April

8:30- 17:00: *Technical Tour of the city of Urmia and Khoy*

20.00: *Dinner*

Evening: Task Force members to depart from Urmia at leisure.

See the General Information Note for additional information.