



Preparatory Notes for Delegates 6th UNWTO Silk Road Task Force Meeting

The key objectives of this meeting are to strengthen the role of the Silk Road Task Force and to implement the priorities and strategies of the Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017. This gathering of Task Force members from across the Silk Road is designed to provide Member States with the opportunity to give direct input into the Programme and contribute to the achievement of tangible and feasible results. It is intended to be a practical working group that will allow you to make a positive contribution on behalf of your country.

The Silk Road Programme is focused on three key areas of activity:

- Marketing and Promotion
- Capacity Building and Destination Management
- Travel Facilitation

The Meeting will be organized so that participating Member States can contribute to the generation of ideas and initiatives that will strengthen Silk Road tourism across these three key areas. We would like to devise strategies and plans for how Ministries, destinations and local stakeholders can benefit by implementing collaborative initiatives, which could include:

- Development of concrete initiatives and project ideas, with a particular country or clusters of countries taking the lead
- Innovative campaigns for collaboratively strengthening the Silk Road brand and raising awareness
- Concepts and/or models for community capacity building programmes across the Silk Road
- Development of trans-boundary partnerships
- Approaches to securing funding and human resource capacity for the Silk Road programme

The success of this event is dependent on the input of all involved and we therefore kindly request that all are well prepared for each session. This Meeting is designed to be interactive and stimulate the generation of new ideas, therefore formal presentations have been kept to a minimum. We only ask that you bring creativity and best practice examples that will inspire discussion and solutions for how we can address the challenges to developing tourism on the Silk Road.

To make the most out of your participation in the Meeting, we kindly request that you:

- Review the Silk Road Action Plan- the 2016/2017 edition, which is available online at <http://silkroad.unwto.org/en/content/silk-road-action-plan> For full information on the UNWTO Silk Road Programme, visit silkroad.unwto.org
- Review the minutes from 2015 meetings (attached): *5th UNWTO Silk Road Task Force Meeting* (23-24 April, Seoul, Korea) and *1st Tourism Ministerial Meeting of Countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt* (18-20 June, Xi'an, China)
- Have a basic understanding of your destination's connection with the Silk Road and how this could possibly be utilized to promote and develop tourism
- Review the questions listed within the Silk Road Task Force Meeting programme (and enclosed below for easy reference) and be able to contribute constructively to the discussion with examples from your country

- Prepare/take note of examples of best practice/current activities from your country that you would like to share with your colleagues from the Silk Road
- Bring examples of destination marketing for the Silk Road

Workshop discussion questions (taken from meeting programme):

Please keep in mind that these topics will be covered during the Meeting and that your thoughts and input will be requested.

Workshop 1: Marketing and Promotion

- 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?

Workshop 2: Travel Facilitation and Connectivity

Task Force representatives will be requested to report on progress made over the last 12 months relating to:

- Improvements to visa policies (visas on arrival, e-visas, etc.)
- Aviation growth and route development
- Cross border management

Workshop 3: Capacity Building and Destination Management

- 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 Silk Road visitor experience?

Workshop 4: Standards and Certification on the Silk Road

- What type of certification systems are in place in your destination? (ie. quality standards, sustainability certification systems)
- What are the key benefits of certification systems in your destination? (for suppliers and for consumers)
- Should a certification system be applied to the Silk Road? How could this be achieved?

Important links:

UNWTO Silk Road Programme silkroad.unwto.org

UNWTO Silk Road Action Plan: <http://silkroad.unwto.org/content/silk-road-action-plan>

Additional Suggested Reading

- *Online Guest Reviews and Hotel Classification Systems (UNWTO, 2014)* <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284416646>
- *Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of criteria in 4 and 5 star hotels* <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284416646>