



## Western Silk Road Initiative



The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has officially launched the first phase of the UNWTO/EU Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative, an ambitious tourism project aimed at revitalizing the Silk Road heritage located in the European region, from the Caspian Sea, around the Black Sea and along parts of the Mediterranean basin.

The project is designed to create new opportunities for destinations and tourism stakeholders interested in cross-border partnerships and in developing novel products focused on untapped Silk Road heritage. Within an 18-month timeframe, following key milestones will be achieved:

**Phase 1:** Development of a **Western Silk Road Brand Research and Handbook**. The Brand research will examine the existing usage of the Silk Road identity, audit connections through tangible and intangible heritage in key destinations and develop concepts to strengthen the use of the Silk Road Brand to bring benefits. The final user-friendly handbook will assess the potential of a Western Silk Road tourism brand and provide an overview of promising Western Silk Road tourism segments, such as available sites and local heritage along with tools to enable both the private and public sector use the Silk Road identity within tourism development and marketing.

The Western Silk Road Brand Research and Handbook will be developed by UNWTO Consultant, Mr. Gavin Bell, who has widespread experience in tourism management and tourism development plans.

**Phase 2:** Organization of **two Western Silk Road Capacity Building Workshops**. To be held in 2017, these capacity building workshops will aim to attract as many interested stakeholders as possible - Silk Road destinations (national, regional and local), tour operators, SMEs, academic institutions, etc. - and focus on joint training and the development of new tourism partnerships.

Both these phases will be accompanied by the establishment of a **Western Silk Road Work Group** open to public and private stakeholders alike. The overall aim of the work group is to ensure the efficacy and long-term viability of the project through active support and participation, such as assistance in the development of the handbook through input and ideas, participation in the capacity building workshops and utilization of the Western Silk Road brand in future tourism projects partnerships.

**Should you wish to participate in Phase 1 and be sent a questionnaire for your organization, please contact [silkroad@unwto.org](mailto:silkroad@unwto.org) and/or [gavin@foodnatureculture.com](mailto:gavin@foodnatureculture.com)**