The UNWTO Western Silk Road Brand study – Maximising the Potential

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What is it?

- Exploratory Study
- Partnership between UNWTO and European Commission DG GROWTH
- Geographical remit is wider than European Union
- Aims to utilise the Silk Road to strengthen and diversify tourism offer in relevant countries
- Creating new innovative transnational links
WSR Development Initiative

18 months project

Phase 1:
Western Silk Road Exploratory Study and Handbook (ongoing)

Phase 2:

- Organization of two Capacity Building Workshops (April/June 2017)
- Establishment of the Western Silk Road Work Group
Western Silk Road Exploratory Research

**WHY?**
- Existing Perceptions
- Untold stories and destinations

**HOW?**
- Secondary sources
- Key Trends
- Semi-structured Interviews
- Collaboration with Members of Silk Road Task Force,
- Questionnaire
- UNWTO Affiliate members, Private Sector, and Academic partners
- National SWOT Analyses
- Focus Groups
Silk Road culture (museums, music, artefacts, dances, festivals, etc)
Silk Road monuments
Natural Environment and Scenery
Gastronomy of Silk Road destinations
Interaction with local communities along the Silk Road
Voluntourism (Visiting a destination while engaging in volunteering activities)
Increase self status and prestige
Extreme sports in Silk Road destinations
Visiting friends and relatives
Silk Road Traveller Motivations
Differences Between Western Silk Road and Classic Silk Road

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of attractions</th>
<th>Tourism infrastructure</th>
<th>Target Markets</th>
<th>Intangible Heritage (Music, Folklore Dances, Festivals, Events)</th>
<th>Gastronomical Experience</th>
<th>Historical Heritage</th>
<th>Arts and Crafts</th>
<th>Natural Environment and Scenery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Values</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.77</td>
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</table>
Has the Silk Road brought any marketing benefits?

- YES: 79.2%
- NO: 20.8%
Tangible benefits

1. Increase of earnings
2. Increase of your organisation's visibility
3. Strengthening your brand
4. Reaching new markets
5. Expanding your tourism product variety
6. Expanding your partners network
7. Improving the quality of your tourism products
Untold Stories – Case Studies

Armenia
Bulgaria
Greece
Italy
Russia
Spain
Vikings
Turning the Results into Reality

• Creating a Western Silk Road Brand
• Capturing the Essence
• Creating a Visual Identity
• Positioning the Brand
• Creating a sustainable governance structure
• Turning the Western Silk Road into a Cultural Route
Based on the input from all sources:

- Questionnaire – SWOT
- Semi-structured Interviews
- National SWOT Analyses
- Focus Groups
- Secondary sources

This input provided a framework for the recommendations in the report.
Positive Results

• More Strengths than Weaknesses
• More Opportunities than Threats

• Positive response for Western Silk Road Brand and Route Creation

These days and the Greek Workshop aim to refine and help YOU take ownership

The Western Silk Road depends on YOU
Creating a WSR Brand

**Positioning Statement:** A thematic journey that links East and West

**Brand Personality:** A Modern and Creative Cultural Experience that links East and West, Ancient and

**Emotional Benefits:** Sense of exploration and WOW discovering new stories, destinations, and linkages. Cultural awareness and valuing diversity. Creating a feeling of shared heritage and

**Rational Attributes:** Cultural heritage attractions, Gastronomy, Textile Heritage, Arts, East meets West, Tales of Great Explorers, Tradition and Crafts, Transnational connections
The 4 Attributes – The Brand Essence

- AUTHENTIC
- UNTAPPED
- SHARED
- CONNECTING
Developing a Visual Identity

- Based on the Brand Pyramid – a strong visual identity needed that captures the essence and unique qualities
- Most critical for public awareness
- Not just a logo but complete consistent visual approach
- Western Silk Road Brand Handbook
- Needs input of professional graphic designer Opportunity for members to support with resources!!
• Challenge will be creating a Brand that can work with existing destination brands
• Ensuring the Brand reflects quality and an ethos of sustainability
• Positioning in way that builds consumer and destination confidence
• Potential for building in quality certification
• Need for strong brand management
WSR = Quality

- **Authenticity** – users of the brand have a genuine link with the Silk Road.
- **Sustainability** – users of the brand adhere to a defined set of sustainable tourism standards.
- **Network** – users of the brand maintain an active connection within the Western Silk Road network.
- **Sub Criteria** - potential for differentiation of products – destination, experiences, crafts and gastronomy.
Creating a Sustainable Management Structure

- Need for long term sustainability – not project led
- Establishment of the Western Silk Road Work Group
- Brand management and control of visual identity
- Promoting brand awareness – destinations and consumers
- Need for a structure that can cascade across the potential geographical spread and levels
The main role at this stage should be to build mechanisms for wider promotion.

NTOs especially should review their existing Silk Road presence and then develop strategies for incorporation of the new Western Silk Road identity.

NTOs should integrate the Western Silk Road story into their media activities.

Create a downward cascade of awareness raising on the Western Silk Road initiative amongst the private sector.
Starting promotion activities

- Western Silk Road Web Portal
- Western Silk Road App – a virtual guide with consumer content – a common approach
- Western Silk Road Knowledge Exchange Network
- Lobby travel media to create WSR focussed programming
- Strengthen Western Silk Road presence at travel fairs
Need for long term sustainability – not project led
An effective management organisation
Public – Private partnership – structuring policy and responding to the needs of communities
Promotes quality and consistency of Visitor experience
Need for short, medium and long term strategic planning
Potential approach – utilising the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe methodology

Certification as a full Cultural Route

Could bring many potential benefits:

- Management structure
- A supportive peer network – many innovative developments to learn from
- Marketing advantages
- Greater perceived value to NTOs etc.
- Structure and consistent evaluation
Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 - rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification

1. the theme must be representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe;

2. the theme must permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development;

3. the theme must lend itself to the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies and operators aimed at different publics, including school groups.
• Requirement for Route Manager could fulfill secretariat role as Brand Manager
• Legal status would enable access to diverse funding
• The Certification Dossier process would be excellent tool for self assessment for route development

In the Online Survey 78% of relevant participants expressed that their destinations would consider inclusion. Some destinations already have experience under other routes.
Success will be based on the ownership of the members

Good results from 1st WSR Workshop

Become a part of the Western Silk Road Working Group

Guiding the next steps today – Group Work
Group 1 – Reviewing the Brand Pyramid and Brand Identity
Group 2 – Brand Positioning
Group 3 – Management Structure
Group 4 – WSR as a European Cultural Route
Group 5 – Financing Opportunities
Thank you!

UNWTO Silk Road Programme

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