United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

WEBINAR SERIES: TRAVEL SOUTH OVER CLOUD

South-South Cooperation in Promoting Tourism for Sustainable Development Against the Backdrop of COVID-19 Recovery

March 2021 UNOSSC Cities Project

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 crisis is a major shock for the most vulnerable people and developing countries. Its impact on tourism places further pressure on heritage conservation in the cultural sector. Recovery of tourism destinations and businesses will largely rely on their capacities to utilize new technologies and digital innovations. Aligned with the "Build Back Better" approach and the Cities Project of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the webinar series "Travel South Over Cloud: South-South Cooperation in Promoting Tourism for Sustainable Development against the Backdrop of COVID-19 Recovery" was organized between August and December 2020. In partnership with Institutional Relations and Partnerships, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities (ANCMPM), International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Mexico, World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITR-AP), and the China Association of Trade in Services (CATIS), representatives of UN entities and cities and local authorities, IGOs, NGOs, think tanks, and the private sector from the global South, were invited to exchange good practices and experiences in leverage digitization for the growth and recovery of tourism and to facilitate partnership brokering among multiple stakeholders from the global South for sustainable tourism.

1. South-South Cooperation on Leveraging Digitalization for the Recovery and Growth of Tourism, broadcasted in August 2020
2. Leveraging Digital Innovation in Promoting Tourism Development in World Cultural Heritage Cities in the Context of COVID-19, broadcasted in November 2020

3. Showcasing Good Practice in Promoting Creative Economy and E-commerce for Tourism Recovery, broadcasted in December 2020
4. China-Mexico South-South Experience Exchange: Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Tourism Development in Cities, broadcasted in January 2021

The webinar series achieved its expected results with approximately 1,026,000 live views received globally and 11 countries, 24 cities and local authorities' good practices and knowledge showcased: Henan Province (China), Sao Paulo(Brazil), Dunhuang (China), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Fiji (Tourism Fiji), Venice (Italy), Ministry of Tourism (Khiva, Uzbekistan), Changsha (China), Alanya (Turkey), Baguio (Philippines), Dunhuang (China), Anyang (China), Luoyang (China), Huai'an (China), Rwanda (UNECA), South Africa (Africa Business Group), Durango, Guanajuato, Morelia, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, San Miguel de Allende, and Zacatecas. Moreover, it fostered city-to-city South-South cooperation partnership for advancing sustainable tourism, which is evidenced by speakers expressing strong interest in collaborating with other cities at the webinars and in post-webinar surveys.

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Opening Messages

Mr. Jorge Chediek

former Director and Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation, United Nations Office for South South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

Tourism, through the job it provides, has developed as one of the most critical components for humankind to achieve the objective of eliminating all forms of poverty.

This webinar is a good opportunity for us, in the context of the Project of cities of the global Belt and Road (i.e. SSTC Silk Road Cities Project), to get global cities and local governments from the South to reflect on how we can use digitalization to enhance tourism.

Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic

Director, Institutional Relations and Partnerships, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Technology device and digitalization are really key to the response to COVID-19 in the tourism sector.

We have set a number of priorities…And in all of those seven key priorities, be it at all levels, be it in recovering in confidence, be it in creating incentives, be it in using digitalization for various purposes, the technology divide and digitalization are really key to the response.

Dr. Mechtild Rössler

Director, World Heritage Centre, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Some of the most iconic sights are located in the global South.

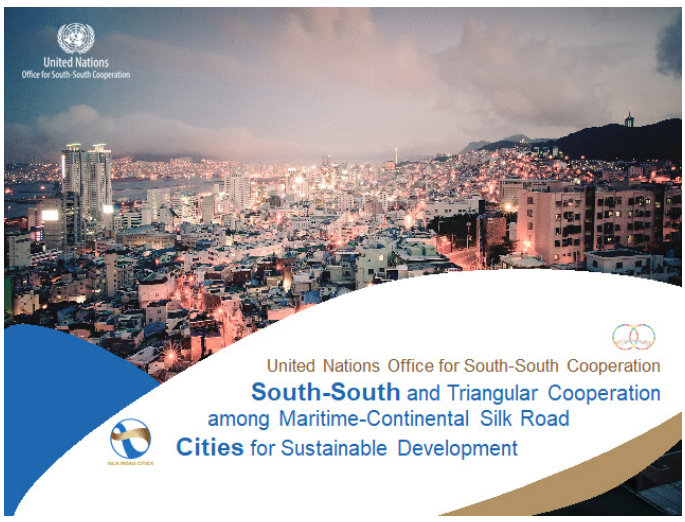
In this increasingly connected world, the future of sustainable tourism and world heritages may well rest in digitalization. The COVID-19 pandemic has only underscored this.

Introduction

About UNOSSC and the Cities Project

In 1974, the United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (hereafter as "UNOSSC", named as "Special Unit for Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries" at that time), an independent entity mandated to promote, coordinate and support South-South and triangular cooperation globally and within the United Nations system. Guided by the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, and under the direct leadership of Envoy of Secretary General on South-South Cooperation, UNOSSC provides support to Member States, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies in the areas of policy advocacy and coordination, strategy research, knowledge sharing, technology exchange, capacity building, and innovative South-South Cooperation projects, to facilitate the partnership building and resource mobilization for the South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development. UNDP has been entrusted by the United Nations General Assembly to provide budgetary and operational support to the UNOSSC since its inception.

In 2017, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) initiated the SSTC among Maritime-Continental Silk Road Cities for Sustainable Development Project (Cities Project) with the support of the Government of China. The Cities Project aims to promote SSTC at the city level leveraging comparative advantages of UN specialized agencies and the strategic opportunities offered by the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Cities Project aligns its support with the engagement and ownership of local authorities and stakeholders. It is designed to provide streamlined services which include demand-driven needs assessment, capacity development, advisory and advocacy, knowledge, expertise and technology transfer and implementation and co-financing support to pilots for demonstration purposes.



Event Background and Introduction

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to a standstill along with multiple sectors, especially the tourism sector which experienced a massive fall in international demand amid global travel restrictions to contain the virus. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has registered the largest decline on record in international tourism flows. [1] This crisis is a major shock for the most vulnerable people and developing countries, as it deprived them of many of the opportunities in job creation, business growth, kick-start development that were and could have been offered by this sector. Moreover, the impact of COVID-19 on tourism places further pressure on the conservation of World Heritage Sites, many of which are located in Southern countries.

New technologies, such as remote and satellite technologies, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and big data, can support the development of tourism infrastructure and quality services across the entire tourism value chain, and also help manage flows of travellers and protect local communities and resources. The capacity to leverage digital platforms and innovation for understanding and monitoring tourists' needs and interests, enriching users' experiences, enhancing tourism SMEs' competitiveness and ability to reach customers, as well as implementing effective health protocols, is key to the recovery of tourism destinations and businesses.

Objectives

Aligned with the "Build Back Better" approach, the Cities Project of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), which supports and promotes South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development at the city level, launched the webinar series "Travel South Over Cloud: South-South Cooperation in Promoting Tourism for Sustainable Development against the Backdrop of COVID-19 Recovery", through inviting representatives of UN entities and cities and local authorities, IGOs, NGOs, research institutes, think tanks, and the private sector from the global South, to (1) exchange good practices and experiences in leveraging digitalization for the growth and recovery of the tourism sector, with particular focus on cultural tourism, heritage conservation, creative economy, e-commerce; (2) discuss the role and potential of South-South and triangular cooperation among cities in the growth and recovery of the

1 UNCTAD, "Trade and Development Report 2020", September 2020. Available from https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=2853

tourism sector; and (3) facilitate partnership brokering among multiple stakeholders from the global South for sustainable tourism.

Language

English, Chinese; sign language (in webinar 3)

Multimedia

To ensure the best visual impact and flow, speakers were encouraged to include local tourism promotion videos in their presentations; all of the four webinars under this series were pre-recorded and edited into four video knowledge products for broadcasting and distribution in various international media channels and networks.

Agenda

Webinar 1	
Welcome by UNOSSC	
Moderator **Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang**	Deputy Director, UNOSSC
Opening Remarks	
Mr. Jorge Chediek	UNOSSC Director and Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation
Ms. Zoritsa Urosevi	Director, Institutional Relations and Partnerships, UNWTO
Presentations and Discussion	
H.E. Mr. Jinping He	Vice Governor of Henan Province, China
Ms. Emma Campbell	Director of Marketing for Tourism Fiji
Mr. Juarez Bottaro	Special Advisor to the Tourism Secretariat, São Paulo City, Brazil
Mr. Jimin Song	Vice-Mayor, Dunhuang City, Gansu Province, China
Mr. Izzatbek Djuraev	First Deputy Director, Department for Tourism Development of Tashkent City, Uzbekistan
Dr. Rui Song	Director of the Tourism Research Centre, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Mr. Jorge Ortega González	Director General of the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities
Q&A / Open Discussion	
Summary and Closing Remarks	
Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang	Deputy Director, UNOSSC

Webinar 2	
Welcome by UNOSSC	
Moderator **Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang**	Deputy Director, UNOSSC
Opening Remarks	
Dr. Mechtild Rössler	Director, World Heritage Centre UNESCO
Presentations	
Dr. Pierpaolo Campostrini	Managing Director, Consortium for Managing Research Activities in the Venice Lagoon System (CORILA)
Mr. Islomiddin Srojidinov	Specialist, Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Uzbekistan
Mr. Jorge Ortega González	Director General of the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities (ANCMPM A.C.)
Mr. Igor Stefanovic	Technical Coordinator, Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department, United Nations World Tourism Organization
Q&A / Open Discussion	
Summary and Closing	
Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang	Deputy Director, UNOSSC

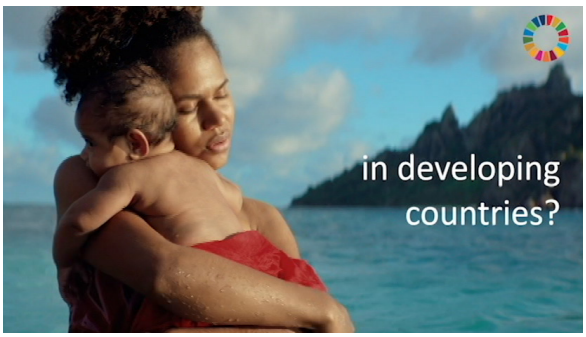
Webinar 3	
Welcome by UNOSSC	
Moderator **Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang**	Deputy Director, UNOSSC
Agency and Institutions Presentations	
Mr. Mirvokhid Azimov	Deputy Secretary General of the Turkic Council
Mr. Tunde Fafunwa	Lead Advisor, Digital Centre for Excellence-Identity, Trade & Economy, UN Economic Commission for Africa
Moderated Presentations	
Mr. Ming Li	Director, Administrative Committee, Malanshan Culture Innovation & Creative Economy Industrial Park, Changsha City, China
Mr. Frank Kwabena Owusu	Director of Operations at the Creative Arts Council of Ghana (its policy head is the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture of Ghana)
Engr. Aloysius Mapalo	Tourism Operations Specialist of the City Government of Baguio, The Philippines
Mrs. Pauliina Muftuoglu	Member of Alanya City Council and President of the Culture and Tourism Committee
Mr. Michael Sudarkasa	Chief Executive Officer, Africa Business Group
Q&A / Open Discussion	
Summary and Closing Remarks	
Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang	Deputy Director, UNOSSC

Webinar 4	
Welcome by UNOSSC	
Moderator Muriel Obon	Project and Event Management Consultant, UNOSSC
Opening Remarks	
Xiaojun Grace Wang	Deputy Director of UNOSSC
Saúl Alcántara Onofre	President of the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Mexico
Insights	
Xin Li	Deputy Director of World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITR-AP)
Qing Mei	Professor at Tongji University
Showcasing Cities	
Nataly Hernandez Romero	Special Assistant to the Tourism Director of the city of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
Gloria Martínez López	Director of Tourism and Culture of the City of Oaxaca, Mexico
Yugang Lu	Vice Mayor of Dunhuang City, China
Raúl Parissi Arau	Secretary of Tourism of Querétaro, Mexico
Gabriel Chávez Villa	Director of Tourism Development and Training of Morelia, Mexico
Dapeng Hu	Director of Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, and Tourism, Luoyang, China
Fernando Martínez Pérez	Municipal Director of Tourism Promotion of Durango, Mexico
Daniel Gutiérrez Meave	Director General of Tourism and Economic Development of Guanajuato, Mexico
Qian Li	Deputy Director of Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism of Huai'an, China
Yara Mariana Nagore Rojas	Director of Municipal Tourism of San Luis Potosi, Mexico
Fabiola Inguanzo González	Secretary of Economic Development and Tourism of Zacatecas, Mexico
Silvia Morales Terrón	Head of the Department of Industry Relations, Puebla, Mexico
Wenming Xue	Director of Bureau of Culture, Radio, Sports and Tourism of Anyang, China
Anabelí Contreras Julián	Director of Promotion and Dissemination, Mexico City Government, Mexico
South-South Exchange / Q&A	
Closing Remarks	
Jorge Ortega González	Director General of the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities

Highlights

Webinar 1

South-South Cooperation on Leveraging Digitalization for the Recovery and Growth of Tourism



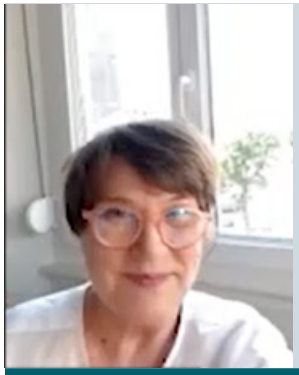
As the world experiences COVID-19 and its profound impact on economic growth and human development, the world has also been becoming more rapidly digitalized. Digitalization has been transforming the economy, providing new strategies and tools for innovation and upgrading. COVID-19 has pushed us to rethink on modalities of business and economic development. Digitalization has not only provided a key

but has become an essential element in economic recovery and development.

The global South has been active and pioneering in exploring innovative ways to recover the economy and enhance their resilience and development capacity. Inspired by digitalization, cloud-tourism, E-commerce and the gastronomy sector have been boosting local economies and reducing poverty. More importantly, digitalization contributes to promoting inclusive growth and sustainable development.

I had the honour to visit several of the places presented here from Henan Province, to São Paulo in Brazil, to many cities in Mexico, to Tashkent. I really have the feeling of the immense beauty and the immense potential for cultural exchanges of all places represented. And I really would like to see how you have translated that into digital mechanisms, to digital vehicles, to digital tools, and also find a way to retain the importance of economic activities that tourism generates and represents for now and for the future.

Mr. Jorge Chediek — former Director and Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation, United Nations Office for South South Cooperation (UNOSSC)



International tourist arrivals will decline by 60 to 80 per cent in 2020. This could translate into a loss in export revenues from tourism of between $910 billion and $1.2 trillion, and place 100 to 120 million jobs at risk. Recognizing that social and economic recovery will need to integrate innovative responses in the broad and complex tourism ecosystem, it is clear that we have an unique opportunity to build back better.

Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic — Director, Institutional Relations and Partnerships, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Henan has attached great importance to digitization in various fields, especially in culture and tourism. We lead the country in setting up smart tourism platforms.

We do promotions, appeal to customers and sell products online.

Mr. Jinping He — Vice Governor of Henan Province

I don't know what we could have done without these digital tools during COVID because they are really really helping us to be quite impactful in marketing.

Ms. Emma Campbell — Director, Marketing for Tourism Fiji

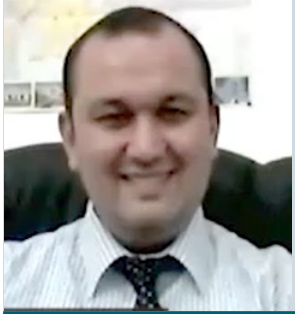
The government of the city of São Paulo presented its 2020-2021 tourism strategy that included a programme of virtual visits to the city's most emblematic monuments, museums and historical buildings

Mr. Juarez Bottaro
Special Advisor to Tourism Secretariat, São Paulo City, Brazil

Ms. Michele Fernanda Ferreira Vicente Oliveira
Director of Technical Division to Promote Tourism / COTUR (coordination of tourism) at the Tourism Secretariat of São Paulo City, Brazil

Dunhuang City has built the world's first Mogao Grottoes digital exhibition centre that reproduced grotto art through panoramic roaming technology.

Mr. Jimin Song — Vice-Mayor, Dunhuang City, Gansu Province, China



It (the Presidential Decree) helps the citizens of 76 countries, including 64 developing country citizens, to use the E-visa system.

Mr. Izzatbek Djuraev — First Deputy Director, Tourism Department of Tashkent City, Republic of Uzbekistan

We are in a highly uncertain period or era, what can we do from the industry side?

Innovation and cooperation may be the key.

Dr. Rui Song — Director of the Tourism Research Centre, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

We try to find healing solutions (in Mexico) and here is where digitalization is giving us a great opportunity.

Mr. Jorge Ortega González — Director General of the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities

Digitalization offers a historical opportunity for us to not only recover but re-build a future that is more connected, more sustainable and more prosperous.

We will continue such webinar series and hopefully connect to more partners to transform all the speakers today into real partners in action through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang — Deputy Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

To find out more, please visit South-South Galaxy.

Webinar 2

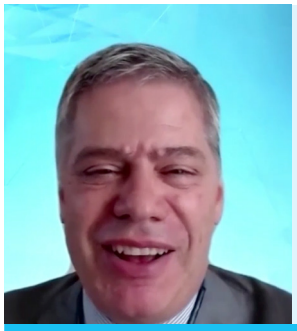
Leveraging Digital Innovation in Promoting Tourism Development in World Cultural Heritage Cities in the Context of COVID-19

The historic components of a city together with its physical environment provides a framework for liveability and well-being, and the current crisis highlights the need for innovative solutions in improving urban resilience and risk preparedness. At the height of the pandemic, 89 percent of the countries closed their world heritage sites to visitors. In April 2020, world heritage sites in Southeast Asia saw a decrease of 99 percent in the number of visitors. During the pandemic, world heritage cities implemented innovative measures

to curb the spread of the pandemic, many of which were made possible with digital tools. In the post lockdown period, heritage sites are slowly opening in the new normal. Yet, re-emergence from the crisis requires a careful balance between safeguarding heritage assets and considering alternative scenarios. In this vein, digitalization remains among the most sustainable and effective solutions.

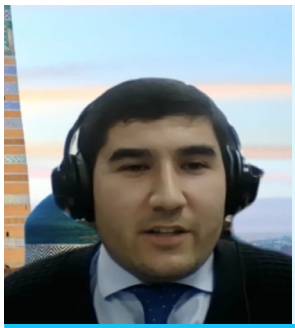
At UNESCO, we believe that culture and heritages make us resilient. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, digital access to culture and nature has provided education, entertainment, and comfort to millions of people staying closer to home. Being a witness of unprecedented demands of online access to culture, some of the world heritage site reported a 30 per cent increase in their website traffic and engagement in their social media accounts, compared to the previous year. Many world heritage cities are implementing and further exploring digital innovation to deal with the new normal.

Dr. Mechtild Rössler
Director, World Heritage Centre, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



New technologies like virtual reality or augmented reality, should be able to prepare the visitors both outside, starting from the programming of the visit, but also inside, in order to be able to to to show what is (and what is not) visible quickly.

Dr. Pierpaolo Campostrini
Managing Director, Consortium for Managing Research Activities in the Venice Lagoon System (CORILA)



If you go to this website uzbekistan360.uz/en, you can see cities, for example Khiva.

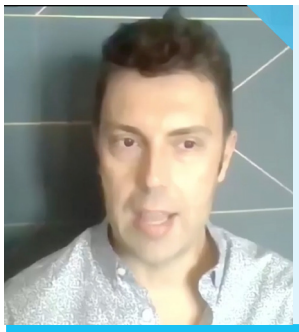
This website enables tourists who really want to visit Uzbekistan even during the pandemic, so they can watch, enjoy and see the beauty of the city of Khiva.

Mr. Islomiddin Srojidinov
Specialist, Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Uzbekistan

Tourism SMEs have been seriously affected and require support and a strategy for their reactivation.

In this digitial platform, while chosing the cities, you will find all the SMEs participating. Here we can see Guanajuato and it will display all SMEs participating.

Mr. Jorge Ortega González Director General of the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities



There is a need for constant retrofitting, upskilling and technological advances, because as we speak today, new drones are being invented, new apps are being launched. And we have to be better connected in order to know what to use and how to harness the potential of all these incredible technological advances.

Mr. Igor Stefanovic Technical Coordinator, Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department, United Nations World Tourism Organization

It is more about people.

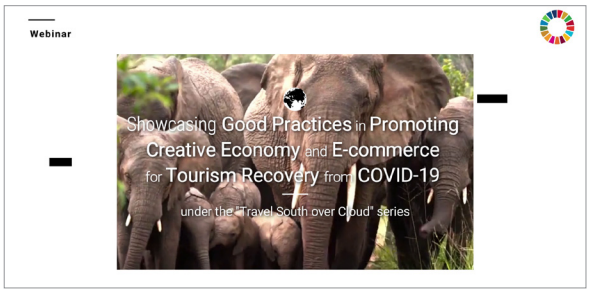
Digital innovations and digital measures are a means to facilitate enhanced and better human experiences. And we do hope the recovery of the tourism sector will benefit from the engagement of all citizens and stakeholders by sharing their ideas and their spontaneous experiences during this period.

Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang Deputy Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

To find out more, please visit South-South Galaxy.

Webinar 3

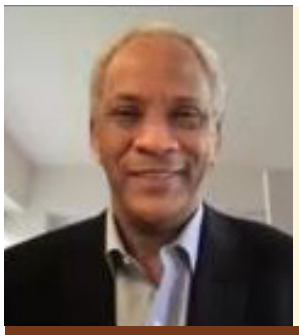
Showcasing Good Practice in Promoting Creative Economy and E-commerce for Tourism Recovery



Creative economy spurs innovation and knowledge sharing across all sectors of the economy. Digital disruption is a key trend influencing the present and the future of creative economies in developing countries. Creative economy sectors are among the hardest hit during the pandemic, such as venue-based sectors, like museums, dance and theatres. In the absence of responsive public support and recovery strategies, the downsizing of cultural and creative sectors tends to have a negative impact on cities and regions in terms of jobs and revenues, levels of innovation, citizen well-being and the vibrancy and diversity of communities.

E-commerce can play an important role in the revival of the tourism sector in developing countries. There are already good practices and successful cases of developing countries utilizing digital tools like e-commerce platforms, campaigns or marketplace to promote tourism. Digital platforms are not only increasingly utilized for sharing and updating tourism information, but also promote trade, selling of local specialties

and handicraft, and particularly the growth of small business and individual entrepreneurs, including women and youth.



Rwanda is actually quite steeped in e-commerce and the digital background.

With significant investments in digital infrastructure and the use of virtual tools making the safety and convenience of tourism to be addressed in this time of a pandemic, it is very possible to recover at least some of the losses from tourism.

Tunde Fafunwa
Lead Advisor, Digital Centre for Excellence-Identity, Trade & Economy, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

We are well aware that applying technology and digitalization in the tourism industry is of utmost importance.

At the Turkic Council, we are committed to promoting South-South and triangular cooperation between the Member States of the Turkic Council and other countries in the global South, through innovative and comprehensive regional and cross-regional cooperation initiatives.

Mirvokhid Azimov
Deputy Secretary General, Turkic Council

The advantage and characteristics of Malanshan Culture Innovation & Creative Economy Industrial Park are videos. Videos and cultural tourism promote and support the growth and development of each other. They are deeply intertwined and systematically connected.

Ming Li
Director, Administrative Committee, Malanshan Culture Innovation & Creative Economy Industrial Park, Changsha City, China

We also introduced an array of digital marketing and distribution avenues to players in the industry, a series of masterclasses to inform the industry of the status we are in and measures taken, as well as opportunities available to boost business in the creative sector and springboard ailing ones.

Frank Kwabena Owusu
Director of Operations, Creative Arts Council, Ghana

We also organized a contemporary visual arts exhibition featuring budding and veteran local artists. This can also be viewed through social media platforms.

And so it takes creativity and innovation to be resilient during these hard times.

Aloysius Mapalo Tourism Operations Specialist, City Government of Baguio, The Philippines

Our region is under the digital and strategy studies and action plan carried out by the Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency within the scope of Turkey as a whole.

Pauliina Muftuoglu Member of Alanya City Council and President of the Culture and Tourism Committee

The Southern African development community is the region that has the highest tourism because Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, and maybe Mauritius, along with South Africa, are all leading destinations on the continent overall. Promote the trans-frontier conservation area and look at how you promote South Africa and Southern Africa as a region where if you visit one country, you book to travel to another. So, you come to Cape Town, you come to Johannesburg and you also visit Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

Michael Sudarkasa Chief Executive Officer, Africa Business Group

Human creativity will be the energy that enhances our recovery and our ability to build back better and more sustainably.

Many countries and communities are still facing a very wide digital gap. The digital divide is hard to cross. Only by cooperation and supporting each other can we overcome this challenge.

Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang Deputy Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

Find out more, please visit South-South Galaxy.

Webinar 4

China-Mexico South-South Experience Exchange: Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Tourism Development in Cities

China and Mexico are both major tourist destinations in the world. Despite geographical distances, international tourist flow between these two countries remained high over the last decade. Furthermore, with 90% of World Heritage Sites having closed as a result of the pandemic, both tangible and intangible heritages are at risk in all parts of the world, especially in China and Mexico, both of which are among the ten countries with the largest number of World Heritage Sites. This demonstrates the possibilities and demands for South-South cooperation in tourism between cities in China and Mexico, to not only generate bilateral tourism interests and flows, but also to learn and apply each other's local development innovations that have been proven to be effective in achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

Given the strong impact and momentum, in response to the common interest in capacity development and demands for partnership building from city partners in China and Mexico, the UNOSSC Cities Project coordinated with the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities **(ANCMPM)**, China Association of Trade in Services **(CATIS)**, and World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO **(WHITR-AP)**, and mobilized **Tongji University**, the International Council for Monuments and Sites **(ICOMOS)** Mexico and four cities in China and 12 cities in Mexico to join this online South-South experience exchange on promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism.

Mexico and China are both major tourist destinations in the world, both among the ten countries with the largest number of World Heritage Sites.

We are also aware that people-centered and cultural-driven tourism is a catalyst for sustainable development, and it primarily takes place in the cities.

Xiaojun Grace Wang — Deputy Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

Today's training courses are very important. They enable us to exchange experiences on how to achieve the sustainable development of both culture and tourism.

We should make greater efforts in the protection of cultural heritages and pay more attention to the development of local communities and their livelihoods.

Saúl Alcántara Onofre — President of the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Mexico

We should emphasize selling cultural products online, to provide visitors with better experience of heritages online, including online cultural products, online interactive experiences, etc. This can be developed further.

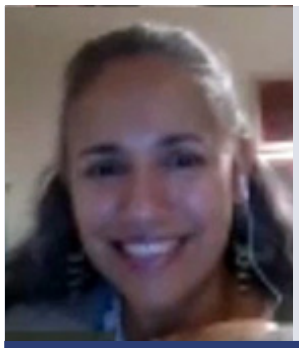
Xin Li — Deputy Director of World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITR-AP)

Gulangyu (Xiamen City, China) originally only had one harbour, but with so many people visiting the site, they opened altogether six harbours. And the local committee tries to control the flow of the people, because if there are too many tourists, it will influence the local people's life. They managed according to the time schedule and the flow of people.

Qing Mei Professor at Tongji University

Dunhuang City has built the world's first Mogao Grottoes digital exhibition centre that showcases grotto art through panoramic roaming technology. We have completed the digital collection of Dunhuang Grottoes and produced a panoramic roaming programme of the caves.

Yugang Lu Vice Mayor of Dunhuang City, China



We are very willing to establish cultural tourism and trade relations with Chinese cities. I think we can start with culture.

I am very happy to have this opportunity to talk to my colleagues in China on the other side of the world. We care about the same issues, and we also hope to find better ways to build a better world with cultural heritages.

Anabelí Contreras Julián Director of Promotion and Dissemination, Mexico City Government

We have established regional tourism cooperation and consultation mechanisms and strengthened tourism cooperation with countries along the Silk Road and overseas countries.

Dapeng Hu Director of Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, and Tourism of Luoyang, China.

We want to ensure that the local communities around the Mayan ruins are not negatively affected by our work. Protecting heritages and improving people's livelihood can coexist.

Verónica Ceballos Cámara Director of Economic Development, Campeche

We took advantage of the short slowdown period during the pandemic to improve our ecological environment. Greening Huai'an is among our city's top development priorities.

Qian Li Deputy Director of Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism of Huai'an, China

World Heritage Sites are undoubtedly key assets of local communities, on the basis of which attractiveness strategies can be built between different levels of governments, the civil society, creative industries, private sector, and visitors.

Jorge Ortega González General Director of the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities (ANCMPM)

The webinar was delivered in Chinese, English and Spanish in four hours. Should you be interested in full webinar recordings, please contact southsouthcities@unossc.org

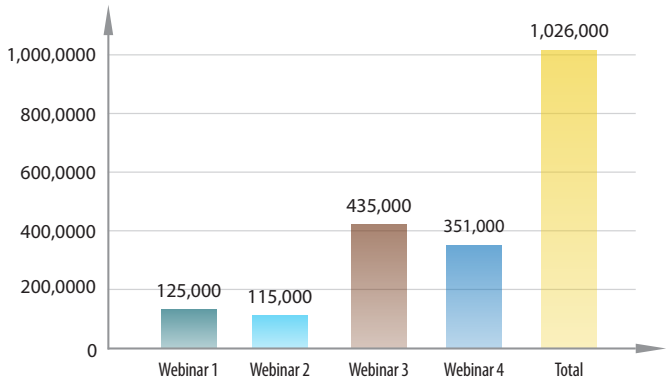
Find out more, please visit South-South Galaxy.

Survey and Assessments Findings

Number of Webinar Views

No.	No. of views received
Webinar 1	125,000
Webinar 2	115,000
Webinar 3	435,000
Webinar 4	351,000
Total	**1,026,000**

Source: media platforms' databases



Post Webinar Survey and Assessment

Following the last webinar, the project team invited cities to answer a simple online survey form. As of 31 December, 10 responses to the survey from 8 Mexican cities were received.

Key Findings

The workshop was able to develop participants' capacities in inclusive and sustainable tourism development - with a focus on cultural heritage preservation, protection, and management - and facilitate brokering city-to-city SSTC partnerships for inclusive and sustainable tourism development. Notably,

100% *of survey respondents were satisfied with webinar materials and contents.*

80% *considered that the workshop delivered information that they expected.*

100% *gained new knowledge that will be applicable to their work.*

100% *interested in creating partnerships for improving inclusive and sustainable tourism.*

100% *found city perspective and the good practices presented at the webinar useful and may consider utilizing the lessons and solutions shared.*

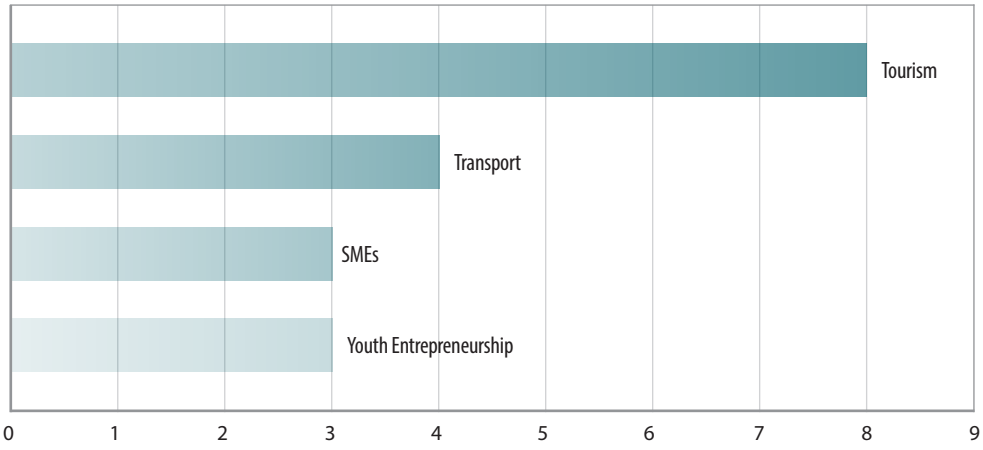
100% *interested to participate in future training workshops.*

100% *interested in collaborating with UNOSSC Cities Project, CATIS, cities and partners on South-South and triangular cooperation.*

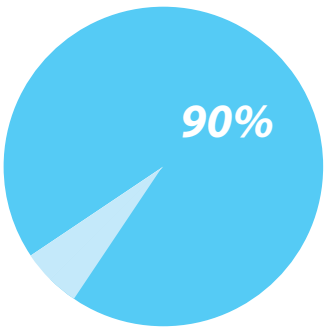
100% *agreed to be contacted by UNOSSC Cities Project and be engaged in development needs assessment and project collaboration.*

It was identified that respondents have strong demands in developing tourism, transport, SMEs, and youth entrepreneurship; they are interested in partnering with Chinese cities.

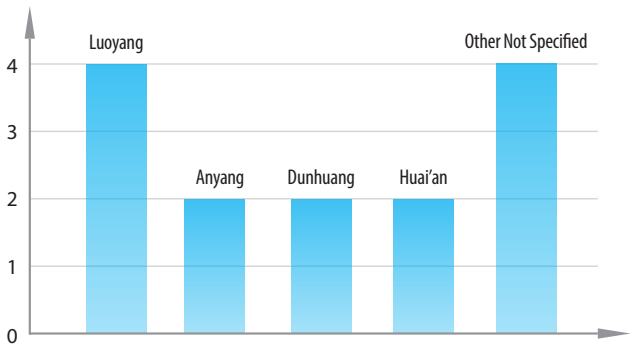
- *Tourism (8), transport (4), SMEs (3), and youth entrepreneurship (3) were prioritized by survey respondents as their current development priorities.*



- *90% participants were interested in collaborating with Chinese cities, including Luoyang (4), Anyang (2), Dunhuang (2), Huai'an (2), and other not specified (4), for collaboration in tourism, trade and commercial activities.*



90% Participants were Interested in Collaborating with Chinese Cities



Participants were Interested in Collaborating with Chinese Cities

Concluding Remarks

The tourism industry is increasingly driven by technology. Digital tools help travellers plan, book, and share their recommendations, and give small tourism businesses in emerging destinations direct access to a global market of travel consumers, to increase their international visibility and sell their products. Digitalization will remain one of the most sustainable and effective solutions to the growth and recovery of the tourism sector, as the pandemic and lockdown measures have led to a change of consumers' behaviours and pushed many small and local businesses to explore e-commerce to promote and sell their products in emerging markets.

To better advance the role of tourism in poverty alleviation and fully utilize tourism digital platforms, cooperation and partnerships are key. South-South Cooperation is a modality of cooperation that encourages solidarity among persons and countries of the South to support each other in the attainment of shared development goals with horizontal approaches. In combating COVID-19, as well as addressing other development challenges, strengthening South-South cooperation and solidarity can offer a positive route forward for developing countries.

Despite devastating costs, COVID-19 also gives an opportunity for urban leaders of the South to reflect, reset and reimagine urban resilience together. Riding on this good momentum and in response to the common interest in capacity development and demands for partnership building from city partners, the UNOSSC Cities Project team will continue organizing capacity development events and facilitating partnership building towards a common goal of achieving sustainable development.

Dr. Xiaojun Grace Wang
Deputy Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

Digitalization offers a historical opportunity for us to not only recover but to rebuild a future that is more connected, more sustainable and more prosperous.

We will continue such webinar series and hopefully connect more partners to transform all the speakers today into real partners in action through South-South and triangular cooperation.

United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE EMAIL TO

southsouth.cities@unossc.org
or visit https://www.southsouth-galaxy.org/maritime-continentalsilk-road-cities-for-sustainable-development-project-cities-project/

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