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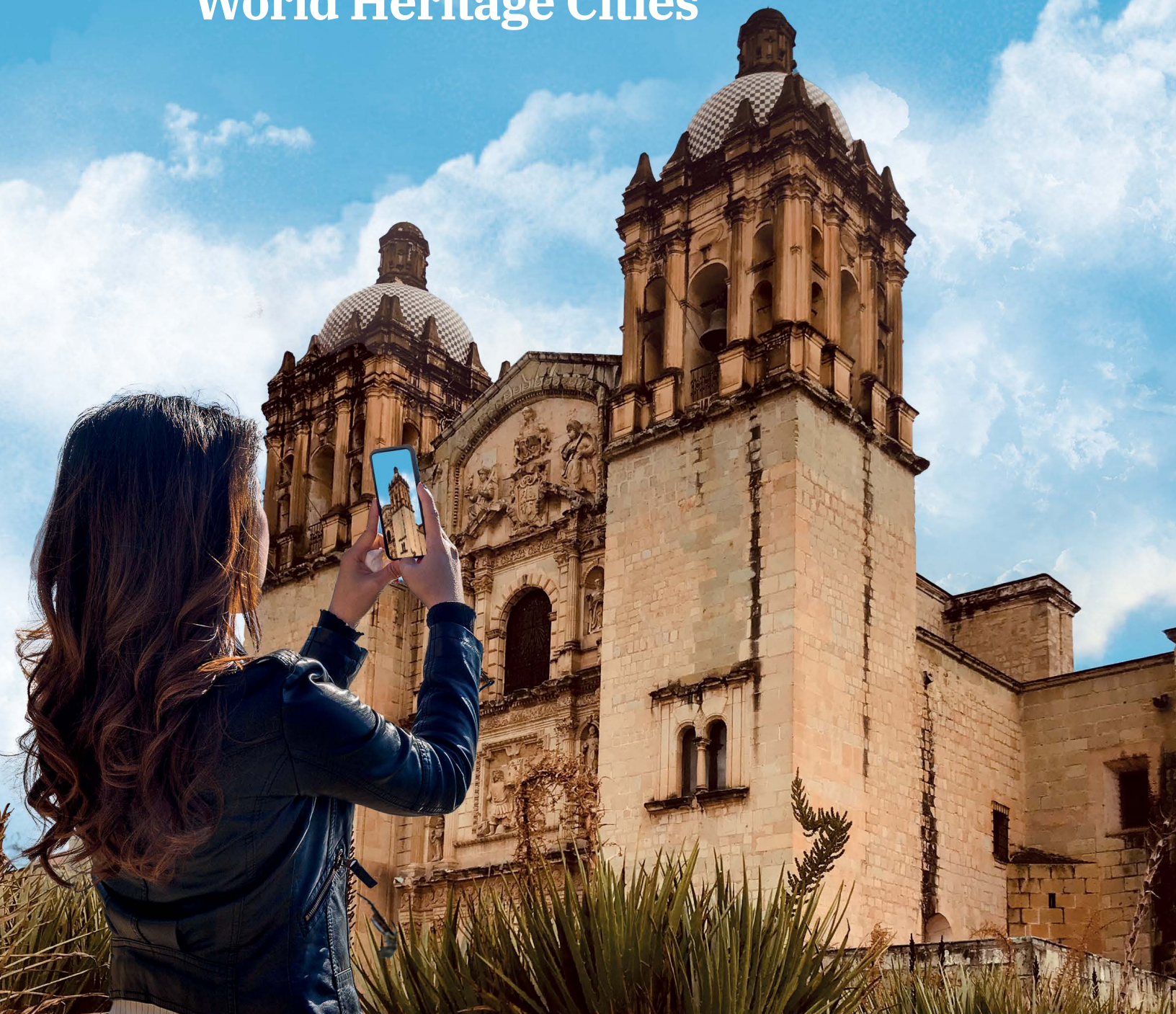
United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation



Ciudades Mexicanas
PATRIMONIO MUNDIAL

Project Summary

South-South Cooperation on Sustainable Tourism Development in Mexican World Heritage Cities



PROJECT SUMMARY

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MEXICAN WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

Office in Mexico of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,
Presidente Masaryk 526, Polanco, 11510, Mexico City, Mexico

United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation,
304 East 45th Street, FF 11th Floor, New York, NY, 10017, USA

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Director

Frédéric Vacheron Oriol

Project coordination

Carlos Tejada (UNESCO), Dingding Sun (UNOSSC),
Muriel Obón (UNOSSC) and Jorge Ortega (AMCPM)

UNESCO office team in Mexico

Alejandro Alcaráz, Luis Carlos Zea, and Elisúa López

Consultores

Lizeth Salazar, Agustín Ruiz, Jorge Ortega, José Francisco Román and Galia Rabchinsky

Editing

Carlos Tejada, Muriel Obón, Alejandro Alcaráz, Luis Carlos Zea and Elisúa López

Conceptualization and editing

UNESCO Mexico

Graphic design and layout

Abigail Mejía (Ataraxia Taller de Diseño & Producción Editorial)
Krystal Mejía (Ataraxia Taller de Diseño & Producción Editorial)

Cover design

Abigail Mejía (Ataraxia Taller de Diseño & Producción Editorial)

Proofreading

Luis Mejía (Ataraxia Taller de Diseño & Producción Editorial)

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Project Summary

South-South Cooperation on Sustainable Tourism Development in Mexican World Heritage Cities

A knowledge product of the pilot initiative "South-South Cooperation on Sustainable Tourism Development in Mexican World Heritage Cities" between the UNESCO Office in Mexico and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), through its South-South Cities Project.



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In cooperation with UNESCO Mexico and Mexican World Heritage Cities Association (MWHCA or ANCMPPM), the UNOSSC Cities Project launched the pilot “South-South Cooperation on Sustainable Tourism Development in Mexican World Heritage Cities” aimed to enhance capacities of local authorities for achieving a sustainable growth and recovery of the tourism sector and exchange practices through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

As the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets offer the world a new direction, sustainable tourism can and must play a significant role in delivering sustainable solutions for people, the planet, prosperity, and peace. In this regard, UNESCO has developed normative and analytical frameworks, which include the World Heritage List, a list of properties forming part of the cultural and natural heritage of the whole humanity, given their Outstanding Universal Value.

Mexico has 14 cities declared by UNESCO as World Heritage, and these cities work together within the Mexican World Heritage Cities Association (MWHCA). The pilot project reinforces the protection of the Outstanding Universal Values of World Heritage Cities of Mexico, straightens the positive synergies of tourism and culture in the framework of the SDGs and promotes knowledge exchanges and cooperation among cities of the Global South.

The initiative follows a multi-stakeholder partnership approach that includes two United Nations agencies (UNOSSC and UNESCO), and the Mexican World Heritage Cities Association (MWHCA or ANCMPPM), which gathers the local authorities of 14 cities. The initiative also encompasses the partic-

ipation of national level authorities, such as the ministries of culture and tourism, as well as the National Institute of Anthropology and History.

Likewise, to promote inter-city dialogue and focus the objectives on a Sustainable Cultural Tourism, seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but recognizing the resilient character of culture, which transversally influences the development of this sector. It is crucial to explore innovative tools that may help reduce these negative impacts and share good practices of these efforts. The UNOSSC-UNESCO initiative is focused on strengthening the local capacities of Southern cities and localities to promote inclusive sustainable and responsible tourism in the global digital era, with a view to recovering and reactivating the sector following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pilot project achieved five deliverables:

1. Needs assessment that identifies areas to strengthen capacities of local authorities and key agents in the subjects such as SDGs, sustainable tourism, protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the cities, and communication strategies and management of social networks and digital platforms for cultural tourism.
2. Creation and facilitation of a South-South Cities cluster on sustainable tourism that serves as a community and platform for mutual learning between cities of the Global South.
3. Capacity development trainings to improve skills of local authorities, SMEs, and communities, and increase their knowledge on sustainable tourism and digital transformation.
4. Development of products derived from the implementation: a) a catalogue of good practices on tourism

promotion that integrates SDGs and heritage conservation; b) a guide to improve the capacities of World Heritage cities to use digital media in; c) a strategy for positioning world heritage Mexican cities as sustainable tourism sites.

Capacity building program for the promotion of cultural tourism, heritage, and the diversity of cultural expressions in digital media in the context of South-South and triangular cooperation.

This research presents the results of the capacity-building program for the promotion of cultural tourism in digital media that promotes the knowledge and valorization of cultural heritage, the diversity of cultural expressions and South-South and triangular cooperation. To carry out this program, information was previously gathered through a needs assessment to identify the capacities and needs of the 14 Mexican World Heritage Cities. A mixed methodology was chosen to ensure a quantitative and qualitative perspective in the digital questionnaires to key actors.

The program's main objectives are the development of planning tools, the strengthening of communication practices, and the promotion and monitoring of good practices that communicate the OUV, since the lack of integration of digital tools is a threat in a context where the transformation processes lead to the integration of these channels.

Within the digital landscape identified, there are programs that can support tourism development and show the interests of visitors, which should



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be the points on which to work on communication campaigns to strengthen the visibility of the OUV and South-South cooperation in MWHC.

The program proposes the implementation of various activities with the aim of achieving the goals of digital integration, through workshops, exchanges of experiences, accompanying guides, outreach projects and assistance in the implementation of digital projects that could take advantage of social networks for the promotion and dissemination of the OUV and South-South cooperation. In this way, the main challenges can be addressed, which are the digital integration of cities that are not continuously active in digital channels, collaborations with other agencies and institutions to create synergies and cities positioning, as well as the concepts and the platforms themselves.

In this way, the aim is to generate the relevance of the of the Mexican World Heritage Cities designation by integrating this concept as an axis in digital campaigns, optimize human capital for the management of these



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channels and be able to quantify the results more effectively in the short term.

Therefore, the narrative would become more concrete, greater cooperation between cultural agents could be generated, as well as collaboration in the promotion of the OUV so that it is included as a representative element of tourist attraction and possible international cooperation. The participation of more service providers and tourism products would be encouraged, creating a synergy that could be more present and available to the public, and future partners in South-South cooperation.

Capacity Building Workshops for the promotion of cultural tourism in the digital environment of Mexican World Heritage Cities.

A series of workshops were held in the areas of communication management, digital content planning and monitoring of communication objectives in digital media to obtain various results.

The expected results of these workshops were: 1) to raise awareness among agents of the importance of digital channels for the enhancement of Cultural Heritage in the region, and therefore of the Outstanding Universal Value; 2) to strengthen the planning and execution of communication on digital platforms; 3) to strengthen the knowledge of the factors to consider in terms of management of digital channels and; 3) to identify the main challenges of the management of these digital channels, with the agents involved.

Through the implementation of four sessions and various questions to be discussed, results focused on each of the objectives were obtained. In terms of the importance of promotion, the current need to implement digital communication as an essential tool was identified, but through the appropriate channels for each of the different heritage examples, in addition to the indirect importance they represent in generating interest and facilitating the development of campaigns, alliances and joint projects. Within these proposals, the OUV and South-South cooperation

must be translatable elements that become an added value of the projects to be communicated in the various digital channels in order to create a favorable synergy in each territory and cultural marketing.

One of the most important challenges that arose through the project was the identification of audiences and the diversity of digital channels that respond to different needs, and consequently, the generation of diverse content. Interaction through each platform requires specific training, as well as identification of needs and appropriate platforms to obtain the expected results. Therefore, strategic communication planning is vital for the design of campaigns and each of the contents. One of the workshops aimed to clarify the available tools and how to favor the communication of heritage, as well as the importance of the OUV and South-South cooperation through the optimization of communication equipment by identifying the most important visual factors in the platforms and better use them.

Finally, the practical sessions resulted in the identification of processes for obtaining results, which are translated into quantitative behavioral indicators. These indicators allow to verify and follow up the campaigns and communication objectives, but above all, to identify the elements that generate digital reputation and favor the results of digital communication campaigns.

To this end, the workshops seek to comprehensively train the communication teams in creating digital content that will have a favorable impact on the preservation of Cultural Heritage and OUV as elements to support cultural tourism to be shared through South-South and Triangular Cooperation.



Pilot Strategy to Visibilize Mexican World Heritage Cities and their Outstanding Universal Value

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The capacity-building program aimed to make visible and raise awareness of the essential elements of the Outstanding Universal Value in World Heritage Cities through digital channels, since official tourism and culture sectors have mentioned the need to reinforce the dissemination of the work related to cultural tourism based on these elements. The strategy seeks to be developed in 14 territories that are under this denomination; as a pilot project, it will be applied in the city of Campeche, using Instagram as a digital means of analysis.

For this document, three target audiences were used: 1) followers of the cities' social networks, 2) academia and 3) content creators; in order to focus the strategy on interested institutions, as well as the public that already has an interest in the cities and those who can become an influence in the community, but who need to strengthen their communication skills.

As part of the strategy, the different proposals that should be included in a digital communication campaign were made. Different written contents were addressed as well as a program of activities and content grids, based on historical factors and ways to attract attention. These strategies were based on the analysis of campaigns carried out by other accounts whose objective was the communication of tourism in World Heritage Cities. A series of base images are also proposed to visually identify what can be more attractive to audiences and as a guide for content creators.

The pilot strategy seeks to promote awareness and dissemination of the OUV and World Heritage Cities in digital channels in order to generate an approach to new audiences, and city stakeholders that are already active but may be unaware of the elements of uniqueness of which to base cultural and creative tourism promotion campaigns, generating more sustainable projects.

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Touristic notoriety of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Mexican World Heritage Cities

A research was carried out with the objective of understanding the tourism visibility of the OUV of the World Heritage Cities, either by means of their own declaration or, in the case of some of them, that are integrated into the Camino Real Tierra Adentro itinerary. This way, areas of opportunity can be detected for capacity building and, to a large extent, a guide of good practices to take advantage of elements that favor sustainable tourism and promote South-South cooperation.

The project focused on the cities of Guanajuato, San Miguel de Allende, Querétaro, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Mexico City, San Juan del Río, Zacatecas, Durango, Morelia, Xochimilco, Campeche, Lagos de Moreno and Tlaxcala. These cities have criteria of exceptionality, integrity, authenticity and management plans; which are a clear reflection of the pillars on which tourism recovery can be based after the COVID-19 crisis that resulted in the fall of tourism activity. Based on survey instruments for each of the sectors, the pertinent results for the research were obtained.

In terms of Outstanding Universal Value, the response from the cities is varied, and sometimes inconsistent, although the majority responded affirmatively on understanding the subject and relating it to sites of interest in the cities; therefore, an interest in the value is observed, but a broader recognition is lacking.

The general concern resulting from the surveys is the degree of preservation of the cultural assets related to the

OUV, since they are assets identified by the population, which have a high level of affluence, so they are recognized by the population; the concern scales proportionally in aspects of conservation, restoration and use of the spaces. This does not have an impact of interest on the business sector, since, as highlighted in the studies, greater relevance is required in this area to equilibrate the efforts between civil society and the private sector.

This project can generate strategies capable of tourism to find a way of development, since the perception of society is that there is a 70% of visitors who can understand the OUV and thus have a quality cultural experience. It is necessary to position the World Heritage label as an element of promotion and cultural marketing, since this can provide job opportunities and tourist attractions that benefit the business sector, the cultural and creative sector, and civil society. This is why it is important to generate workshops and strengthen marketing capacities, as well as the concepts implemented by the 1972 World Heritage Convention in order to generate the basis for sustainable cultural and creative tourism, with a profound social impact.

Design, organization and implementation of a data collection and analysis process to contribute to the project "South-South Cooperation for the strengthening of sustainable tourism in Mexico's World Heritage Cities".

An analysis focused on the relevance of cultural tourism and the implementation of the 1972 Convention through the National Association of Mexican World



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Heritage Cities. The need to review and strengthen the conservation capacities of World Heritage sites in order to avoid deterioration and commercialization caused by an uncontrolled influx of tourists. A sector that represents 10.9% of the world GDP and 8.7% of Mexico's GDP. Sustainable tourism can be an engine for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, therefore, and due to the significant growth, it seeks to draw attention to the concern and align tourism to environmental sustainability, social equity and sustainable development objectives.

The main objective of this project was to collect data and information on Mexican World Heritage Cities to diagnose the current state regarding the presence of these cities in the digital environment, as well as the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and creative industries to define the process of generating information through South-South Cooperation for the improvement of cultural tourism and the socialization of Outstanding Universal Values. This work was divided for its integral vision in different topics such as: sustainable tourism,



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tourism and world heritage cities, sustainable tourism, linking tourism and world heritage management with the SDGs and creative industries.

As a result of the research, the project proposes to encourage tourism for its economic part and for the development of the sector, raising awareness through the potential of cultural tourism, as well as facilitating partnerships between local and state authorities. In addition, it is essential to train those in the field to share the concepts that facilitate the protection of heritage. The project also seeks to strengthen Mexican World Heritage Cities through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, taking advantage of their existing infrastructure. Finally, the project considers participation mechanisms so that diverse representation can contribute to strategies and regulations.

The generation of dialogues is one of the foundations on which the alliance with the United Nations Office for South-South and Triangular Cooperation is based and on which the South-South Galaxy platform that brings together the cities in these exchanges is based, where the results are presented and which favors the generation of heritage experiences and the development of communities in the field of world heritage.

The results are presented to favor the generation of heritage experiences and the development of world heritage communities, which directly complements this data collection study, that also supports the cities in this cluster to review the policies applied in other states and the positive and innovative mechanisms that can be replicated.



The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through its Office in Mexico and the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities (ANCMPPM) have formed an alliance to design and implement a pilot initiative to improve the capacities of local authorities, small and medium-sized enterprises and communities to strengthen the tourism sector and bring it closer to sustainable development.

This joint work seeks to generate an in-depth evaluation of the needs of each group within the tourism sector, relying on local experts so that sectoral groups of cities and associations can be developed to facilitate South-South and Triangular Cooperation, as well as the creation and dissemination of promotional and knowledge products that raise public awareness of Cultural Heritage and generate strategies based on the elements that make up its Outstanding Universal Value.

The summary is the result of the work of local experts and agents who have collaborated in the development of the project, under the coordination of the three organizations and present the following documents: the design, organization and execution of the data collection that serves as the basis for the project; the capacity building program for the promotion of cultural tourism in the digital environment; a report on the tourism visibility of Mexican World Heritage Cities; a pilot strategy for their visibility; the results of various capacity building workshops; and finally, a selection of good practices that allow the tourism promotion of the Outstanding Universal Value in Mexican World Heritage Cities.

This wide selection of documents makes it possible to identify challenges and opportunities for Mexican Cities, so that they can implement tourism rescue strategies based on the elements that give them their heritage identity, especially in an increasingly digital environment that is constantly changing based on the needs of a rapidly changing society that cannot fail to be sensitive to its Cultural Heritage.

