

# AM News

VOL. 65 - June 2024



UN Tourism



*Dear Affiliate Members,*

*I am pleased to introduce you to a new edition of the Affiliate Members Newsletter. This monthly publication will inform you about the latest news, events, and initiatives related to your membership and the Affiliate Members' network. Also included is the updated calendar of events for 2024, featuring the main UN Tourism events.*

*The Middle East has taken center stage in the tourism sector in recent weeks. The latest UN Tourism Barometer reports that the region has demonstrated exceptional growth, with international arrivals surpassing pre-pandemic levels by an impressive 36% in Q1 2024, marking a 4% increase from Q1 2023. Additionally, the Middle East played host to the AIM Congress and the Regional Commission for the Middle East.*

*As the next UN Tourism Statutory Meetings approach: the 121st UN Tourism Executive Council, the Regional Commission for Asia and the Pacific & Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Asia and the Pacific, and the Regional Commission for Africa; we are optimistic about counting on a high level of engagement from our Affiliate Members, whose perspective from the tourism private sector is crucial to the development of an inclusive, accessible, and sustainable tourism industry.*

*We are also pleased to report that the new tools and functionalities of the AMConnected+ platform have been received positively by Affiliate Members. The user-friendly interface, inspired by the most widely used social networks, allows for easy navigation based on interests through Regional and Thematic Channels. The mobile version and other available features reflect our commitment to providing value to the UN Tourism Affiliate Membership. For those Affiliate Members eager to navigate the platform with more confidence, we are organizing a new Webinar on how to use AMConnected+. Stay tuned to AMConnected+ for more information about the upcoming events and initiatives for Affiliate Members!*

*The Affiliate Members Department is committed to collaborating and supporting our Affiliate Members' projects to the best of our abilities. We are always available to hear your comments and feedback.*

*Sincerely,  
Ion Vilcu  
Director*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ion Vilcu', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

# AMD

## the Affiliate Members Department

The UN Tourism Affiliate Members Department (AMD) fosters public-private cooperation in tourism and the synergies among Affiliate Members and Member States. Bringing together around 500 private companies, associations, educational institutions, and DMOs, the Affiliate Membership provides an unparalleled space for members to engage in dialogue, exchange knowledge, support new measures and create synergies that promote the development of the sector, and contribute to the promotion of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



### OUR MISSION

Helping private entities to forge alliances, fostering dialogue and collaboration, as well as strengthen synergies between Member States and Affiliate Members to face the challenges of the tourism sector

### OUR PURPOSE

Supporting the development of the tourism sector by contributing to the achievement Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations

### OUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Assisting our members in the development of a more inclusive, responsible, sustainable and accessible tourism industry

## Main Objectives of the Membership

- 1 VISIBILITY**  
Enhance the work of our Affiliate Members through the new communication channels
- 2 NETWORKING**  
Promote the creation of alliances among like-minded Affiliate Members and Member States around the world
- 3 PARTICIPATION**  
Facilitate the participation of our Affiliate Members in major events and international initiatives that will provide them with value and visibility
- 4 KNOWLEDGE**  
Collect and share information, data, and research relevant to the Tourism Industry
- 5 COOPERATION**  
Foster collaboration in joint projects with the UN Tourism and in business projects among Affiliate Members
- 6 SUPPORT**  
Offer institutional support and endorsement to promote new projects developed by the Affiliate Members
- 7 DEVELOPMENT**  
Create opportunities for new innovative business projects for Affiliate Members that will contribute to the sustainable development of the Tourism sector

# AGENDA OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS - EVENTS 2024

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## UN TOURISM STATUTORY AND HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS

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### UN TOURISM EXECUTIVE COUNCILS

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10-12 June	<b><u>121st Executive Council</u></b>	Barcelona, Spain	In Person
Q4	<b>122nd Executive Council</b>	TBC	In Person

### UN TOURISM REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

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7-9 April	<b><u>70th Regional Commission for Europe</u></b>	Tirana, Albania	In Person
29-30 April	<b><u>69th Regional Commission for the Americas</u></b>	Varadero, Cuba	In Person
22-24 May	<b><u>50th Regional Commission for the Middle East</u></b>	Muscat, Oman	In Person
26-28 June	<b><u>36th Joint Meeting of East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia</u></b>	Cebu, Philippines	In Person
22-24 July	<b><u>67th Regional Commission for Africa</u></b>	Livingstone, Zambia	In Person

### BOARD OF THE AFFILIATE MEMBERS

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24 Jan.	<b>59th Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members</b>	Fitur, Madrid	In Person
Nov. TBC	<b>60th Meeting of the Board of the Affiliate Members</b>	WTM, London, UK	In Person

### COMMITTEE ON MATTERS RELATED TO AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP

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6 June	<b>5th Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)</b>		Online
TBC	<b>6th Meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)</b>	TBC	Online

## UN TOURISM/AMD THEMATIC EVENTS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS

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22-23 March	<b><u>12th World Congress on Snow, Mountain and Wellness Tourism</u></b>	Encamp, Andorra	In Person
27 Sept.	<b><u>World Tourism Day</u></b>	Georgia	In Person
22-24 July	<b><u>2nd UN Tourism Regional Conference on Brand Africa</u></b>	Livingstone, Zambia	In Person
26-28 July	<b><u>First UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa</u></b>	Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe	In Person
11-13 Sept.	<b><u>8th UN Tourism Global Conference on Wine Tourism</u></b>	Armenia	In Person
17-18 October	<b><u>3rd Sustainable Destinations Summit</u></b>	Mallorca, Spain	In Person
Q4	<b><u>9th UN Tourism World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism</u></b>	Bahrain	In Person

## AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT EVENTS

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26 January	<b>UN Tourism Affiliate Members Corner: Insights into Key Outbound Tourism Markets</b>	Fitur, Madrid	In Person
8 February	<b><u>Webinar on How to Use AMConnected+</u></b>		Online
19 April	<b>International Forum: “Turismo y Cultura: una relación de película” (Premios Platino)</b>	Quintana Roo, Mexico	In Person
25 June	<b><u>Webinar on How to Use AMConnected+ (in Spanish)</u></b>		Online
28 June	<b><u>UN Tourism Affiliate Members’ Global Networking Session</u></b>	Cebu, the Philippines	In Person
October (TBC)	<b>International Conference on Tourism and Aviation</b>	Istanbul, Türkiye	In Person

# AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

## Affiliate Members represented during the 50th Regional Commission for the Middle East

The 50th Regional Commission for the Middle East took place on 22-24 May in Muscat, The Sultanate of Oman.

The Regional Commission for the Middle East welcomed high-level delegations from 13 Member States, including eight Ministers of Tourism. Welcoming delegates, UN Tourism Secretary-General invited all Members to join him in celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Commission.

The agenda of the Commission focused on the following priority topics:

- Political outlook and the situation in the Middle East
- The implementation of the Programme of Work 2024-2025
- Latest data on tourism arrivals and receipts
- Priorities of the Regional Commission
- Update on the preparations of the World Tourism Day 2024

It is worth noting that during the Commission, the Affiliate Members were represented by the Board Member: Red Sea Global.

Through this representation, a message was conveyed to the participants about the status of the Affiliate Membership in the Region, and the main activities of the Affiliate Members included in the Programme of Work.

To conclude, Members agreed that the 51st Regional Commission for the Middle East will be held in Doha, Qatar, in 2025

In the framework of the regional Commission also took place the Side Conference "Investing in Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Financing " which counted with the participation of several Affiliate Members as speakers:

- Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority
- Fujairah Adventures Centre

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

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## Signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between UN Tourism and Turkish Airlines

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the first Turkish Airlines direct flight between Madrid and Istanbul, UN Tourism and Turkish Airlines signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

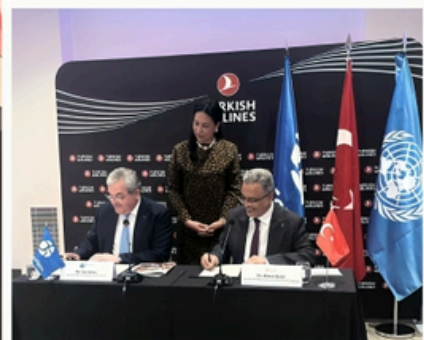
At the signing ceremony, Turkish Airlines was represented by Mr. Ahmet Bolat, Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee while UN Tourism by Mr. Ion Vilcu, Director of the Affiliate Members Department. Furthermore, Your Excellency, Ms. Nüket Küçükkel Ezberci, Ambassador of Türkiye in Spain, was also present to accompany the signing.

This MOU lays the foundation for our collaboration in the coming years, focusing on the following priority areas:

- Sustainable tourism and aviation development
- Public-private cooperation
- Sports Tourism

The signing ceremony was followed by a gala dinner in honor of the 40th anniversary of Turkish Airlines' direct flights between Madrid and Istanbul. One of the speakers during the gala was our Affiliate Member, the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA). Participants had the opportunity to network and learn more about the diverse regions of Türkiye.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

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## UN Tourism and ICCA Partner Around Sustainable Development of Meetings Industry

The recent visit of an ICCA delegation to UN Tourism headquarters culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), symbolizing the deepening collaboration between the two entities. This partnership aims to enhance the business tourism industry's activity and impact, aligning with broader global sustainability goals. The MOU outlines various areas of cooperation, including raising awareness of business tourism's value, supporting mutual events, promoting education, fostering collaboration, amplifying visibility for entrepreneurs, showcasing best practices, and advocating for the industry's economic significance.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "The partnership between UN Tourism and ICCA recognizes the growing economic importance of business events for our sector.

ICCA has been a valued Affiliate Member of UN Tourism since 2004, and our collaboration has yielded several joint publications and initiatives focused on advancing the Meetings Industry. With this new partnership, we look forward to shaping a more sustainable and resilient future for the business tourism sector."

ICCA CEO Senthil Gopinath says: "This collaboration with the UN Tourism has been a long-held strategy of ICCA. This is great news not just for our members but for the whole international associations meetings and events industry. We know how intrinsically linked the world of business events and tourism are, but this formal partnership gives us privileged access to each other's communities. The partnership agreement also signifies a closer alignment of our industry-leading programmes."

You can find more information [HERE](#)





# AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

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## Affiliate Members Department attends the 39th edition of CETT Alimara Barcelona Awards

The Affiliate Members Department has participated in the celebration of the Alimara Awards ceremony, included in the Programme of Work 2024-2025, and organized by our Affiliate Member CETT.

The awards have been granted to the projects selected by the Jury Members according to the criteria of the contribution of an innovative vision in the field of: experiences, digitalization, sustainability, and research applied to the tourism, hotel, and gastronomic sectors during the last year.

The chef Carme Ruscalleda, the program La Travessa, and the company Grup Julià were recognized in the 39th edition of the CETT Alimara Awards.

Presented at the Night of the Alimara, the CETT Alimara Barcelona Awards recognize projects that over the past year have offered an innovative vision in the fields of experiences, digitalization, sustainability, and applied research in the tourism, hospitality, and gastronomy sectors.

The awards are an initiative of CETT, a university center that is a leading reference in tourism, hospitality, and gastronomy, and attached to the University of Barcelona, organized together with the B-Travel Tourism Exhibition and in collaboration with the Generalitat de Catalunya.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

## Join our Webinar on How to Use AMConnected+

AMConnected+ is a dynamic virtual space designed for communication, information sharing, and networking, connecting over 800 representatives and 500 affiliated entities within our network. Since its launch in December 2023, this platform has been providing an engaging interface for staying updated on the latest UN Tourism news and events.

To ensure the Affiliate Members Network makes the most of this resource, and following the success of the first webinar, the Affiliate Members Department is organizing another online webinar, this time in Spanish. This session aims to guide you through the platform's functionalities and enhance your familiarity with its features.

## Topics of the Webinar:

- Introduction
- Benefits and Resources of the Membership
- How to use AMConnected+
- Q&A

## Details:

- Date: Tuesday, 25th June 2024
- Time: 16:00 CEST
- Language: Spanish

You can find more information about the content and registration [HERE](#)

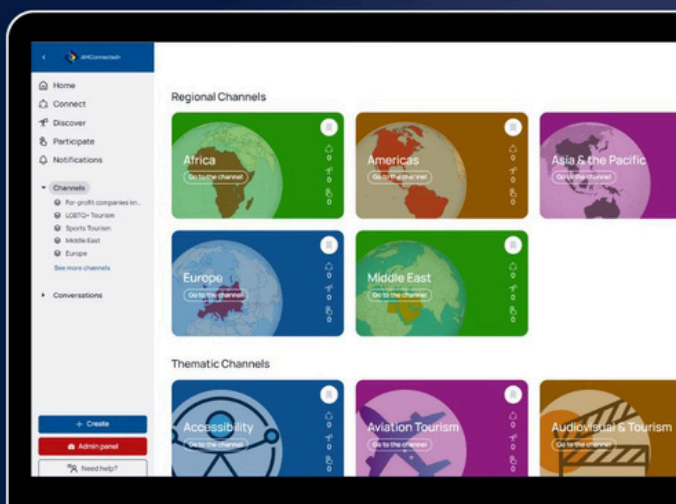


El Departamento de Miembros Afiliados presenta:

## Sesión Informativa sobre AMConnected+

Aprende a navegar por la nueva plataforma AMConnected+ con confianza, y optimiza tu experiencia como Miembro Afiliado

- Fecha: martes, 25 de junio
- Hora: 16:00 (CEST)
- Idioma: español



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS DEPARTMENT

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## News from AMConnected+, the exclusive Affiliate Members' platform

Are you a UN Tourism Affiliate Member new to the AMConnected+ platform, or want to know better how to navigate it?

Have you tried connecting with other Affiliate Members on AMConnected+?

Our platform provides various types of conversations to enhance your networking opportunities within the affiliate community, currently counting with:

- 461 entities
- 929 users
- 3097 resources and content shared
- 4000+ ongoing conversations

Click below on the links to watch an easy video tutorial that will show you, in a few steps, the best way to get in touch with other Affiliate Members:

- [AMConnected+, How to contact other Affiliate Members on AMConnected+ \(English\)](#)
- [AMConnected+, Cómo ponerse en contacto con otros Miembros Afiliados en AMConnected+\(Spanish\)](#)

If you have any doubts, remember the Thematic Channel "First Steps" provides the main guidelines on how to use the platform. Access it [HERE](#)

See you on AMConnected+!



AMConnected+

**Stay connected on the go!**  
**Download AMConnected+ on your phone:**

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iOS



Android



# UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

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## Middle East Members Prioritize Innovation and Investments as UN Tourism Regional Commission Meets for 50th Time

UN Tourism's Member States in the Middle East have looked to the future, coming together to focus on boosting investments into the sector and growing new products to build resilience and expand inclusivity.

The Regional Commission for the Middle East welcomed high-level delegations from 13 Member States, including eight Ministers of Tourism. Welcoming delegates, UN Tourism Secretary-General invited all Members to join him in celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Commission, noting that, over the course of 50 meetings, they have worked together to grow tourism both in size and in impact right across the region.

Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili provided Members with an update on the Organization's work since the Commission last met (Jordan, June 2023), with special attention to key priorities of tourism education, jobs and investments. Opening the meeting he said: "Now, we can confidently say that the Middle East is a true global tourism leader.

Not just in terms of arrivals, but the region is influencing our sector's development everywhere in the world. It is a hub of tourism innovation and education. And it is a leading investor, backing big ideas and ambitious projects with the power to transform tourism at every level."

Following the reports of the Secretary-General and the Regional Director for the Middle East, the focus switched to building a more diverse, resilient and innovative sector. Reflecting UN Tourism's commitment to build resilience and create opportunities through diversification, the significant potential of wellness tourism for the region was made clear. So too was the growing importance of gastronomy tourism as a pillar of rural development and cultural heritage. In Muscat, Secretary-General Pololikashvili formally presented the Omani Minister of Tourism and Heritage with a brochure on Gastronomy Tourism in the Sultanate.

To conclude, Members agreed that the 51st Regional Commission for the Middle East will be held in Doha, Qatar, in 2025.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

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## International tourism reached 97% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2024

International tourist arrivals reached 97% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2024. According to UN Tourism, more than 285 million tourists travelled internationally in January-March, about 20% more than the first quarter of 2023, underscoring the sector's near-complete recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

In 2023 international tourist arrivals recovered 89% of 2019 levels and export revenues from tourism 96%, while direct tourism GDP reached the same levels as in 2019.

UN Tourism's projection for 2024 points to a full recovery of international tourism with arrivals growing 2% above 2019 levels. In line with this, the newest data released by the UN specialized agency for tourism show that:

- The **Middle East** saw the strongest relative growth, with international arrivals exceeding by 36% pre-pandemic levels in Q1 2024, or 4% above Q1 2023. This follows an extraordinary performance in 2023, when the Middle East became the first world region to recover pre-pandemic numbers (+22%).

- **Europe**, the world's largest destination region, exceeded pre-pandemic levels in a quarter for the first time (+1% from Q1 2019). The region recorded 120 million international tourists in the first three months of the year, backed by robust intra-regional demand.
- **Africa** welcomed 5% more arrivals in the first quarter of 2024 than in Q1 2019, and 13% more than in Q1 2023.
- **The Americas** practically recovered pre-pandemic numbers this first quarter, with arrivals reaching 99% of 2019 levels.
- International tourism is experiencing a rapid recovery in **Asia and the Pacific** where arrivals reached 82% of pre-pandemic levels in Q1 2024, after recovering 65% in the year 2023.

International tourism is expected to recover completely in 2024 backed by strong demand, enhanced air connectivity and the continued recovery of China and other major Asian markets.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# UN TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

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## UN Tourism Puts Spotlight on Investments and Empowerment at AIM Congress

UN Tourism returned the Annual Investment Congress (AIM) to put the focus on innovation and women's empowerment, and investments in the Middle East.

The tourism landscape of the Middle East is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by strong government support through economic diversification efforts. Tourism has emerged as a strategic sector offering opportunities for job creation, revenue generation, and sustainable growth. In 2023, the Middle East was leading the sector's global recovery, being the only region to surpass pre-pandemic levels with arrivals reaching 87.1 million international tourists, 22% above 2019 levels.

The region is also performing well on investments: 254 greenfield projects were announced between 2018 to 2023, representing a total capital investment of USD 15.2 billion, and supporting the creation of an estimated 33,690 jobs.

The Middle East is also establishing itself as a global leader in tourism investments, and UN Tourism returned to the AIM Congress to focus on some of the key issues relating to this key priority for the sector: equality and innovation.

"The Middle East is blooming as a destination and as a major player in the global tourism sector. It was the only region where international arrivals last year were actually above pre-pandemic levels, and it's leading the way in greenfield investment projects and in creating jobs. UN Tourism is delighted to be working with the region around our shared priorities", says UN Tourism Executive Director, Natalia Bayona.

On the opening day of the Congress, UN Tourism held a special session centered around two pivotal themes: "Investing in Innovation" and "Enabling Women Entrepreneurs". Experts provided insights into empowering women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector and investing in the next generation of women in technology to drive sustainable tourism growth.

As part of its commitment to gender equality and empowerment, UN Tourism also launched the second edition of its Women in Tech Startups competition for the region, aiming to recognize and support innovative tech-driven startups led by women entrepreneurs working in three categories: People and Skills, Green Travel Solutions and Market Innovators.

You can find more information [HERE](#)



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

## Boosting Rural and Community-Based Tourism with Innovative Knowledge Sharing

Experience Buddy, an innovative Swiss start-up, proudly announces its alignment with the UN Tourism goal to invigorate rural and community-based tourism.

Our platform empowers local residents by providing them with the tools to convert their intimate knowledge of unique, less-travelled destinations into profitable digital travel products. This strategy not only stimulates economic development at an individual level but also plays a crucial role in revitalizing rural communities by promoting sustainable tourism practices.

### Strategic Benefits to Rural Destinations:

- 1. Economic Empowerment:** Experience Buddy offers residents of rural areas the opportunity to generate additional income by sharing their unique local knowledge and cultural heritage through our platform.
- 2. Cultural Preservation:** By showcasing authentic local experiences and hidden gems, we help preserve the cultural identity and heritage of rural communities, ensuring they are celebrated and sustained for future generations.
- 3. Community Engagement:** Our platform encourages community participation in tourism development, ensuring that the benefits of increased tourism flow directly back into the community, improving local infrastructure and services.

### Key Offerings to Enhance Rural Tourism:

- **Digital Travel Guides:** Tailored by locals, these guides serve as a comprehensive resource for discovering rural destinations, fostering greater interest and engagement from international travellers.
- **Live Expert Consultations:** This feature connects potential visitors with local experts for personalized travel planning and insights, enhancing the visitor experience and ensuring deeper cultural immersion.
- **Travel Planning Services:** Delivered by professional guides with deep roots in the community, these services are designed to offer end-to-end itinerary planning focused on local attractions and activities, promoting longer stays and greater economic impact.

Join us to globally promote rural destinations through digital media, empowering local communities and creating an inclusive tourism model that benefits all stakeholders.

URPEAK

### OUR PRODUCTS

Three experience creation tools are available at Experience Buddy. Starting from city guide that will permit to obtain author's anchor points for your trip till fully customised organisation and planning by off the beaten path expert.

#### POCKET BUDDY

Pocket Buddy - is a country or city guide created by experienced traveler. It will permit quickly obtain authentic information.

You will learn about verified places and tips that you will not find on Google in a smart format that can be available on your phone or printed.

[Learn more](#)



#### ONE HOUR BUDDY

One Hour Buddy - is an online consultation with Buddy of your choice during one hour regarding specific location.

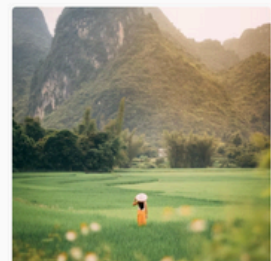
Based on this exchange Buddy will prepare a document with personalized itinerary and local advices.

[Learn more](#)

#### TAYLOR BUDDY

Taylor Buddy - is a fully custom service of planning, booking and coordination by Buddy PRO.

Delegate organisation and enjoy your adventure! Some offers might even include the assistance during the trip.



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

## Call for Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards 2024

Skål International is excited to announce the opening of submissions for the 2024 Sustainable Tourism Awards. Since 2002, these awards have celebrated excellence and innovation in the tourism industry, honoring entities with significant contributions to sustainability.

We welcome submissions from companies in the public and private sectors, educational institutions, NGOs, and government agencies worldwide, all of whom have demonstrated exceptional commitment to sustainable practices.

### Collaborations

This year, Skål International continues its partnership with esteemed UN Tourism. During their 2023 General Assembly and 44th Affiliate Members Plenary Session, Skål International's submission for the joint promotion of the Skål Sustainable Tourism Awards Project was accepted into the Affiliate Members Department Programme of Work 2024-2025. UN Tourism's support of the STA program providing Skål International with their global platforms to promote the STA program and its winners, is an opportunity to showcase excellent "best practices" that can serve as great examples for other institutions, companies, and countries to help in their learning and practice for a more sustainable future.

Winning projects will be promoted through UN Tourism's media channels, significantly increasing their visibility.

Additionally, our ongoing partnership with Biosphere Tourism and the Responsible Tourism Institute since 2018 continues and Sustainable Travel International joins Skål International as a partner in the framework of these awards.

### Judging

A distinguished panel of industry leaders and experts will evaluate the entries, ensuring a rigorous and fair assessment. Their identities will be officially revealed during the 83rd Skål World Congress during the Awards Ceremony to be held in Izmir, Türkiye, on 17 October 2024.

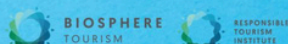
### Key Dates:

- Call for Entries Open: 1 April
- Submission Deadline: 30 June
- Judging Period conclusion: 31 August
- Winners Announcement: 17 October

For more information, visit <https://www.skal.org/sta-winners> or contact [awards@skal.org](mailto:awards@skal.org)



With the collaboration of





## AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

### Reinforcing Bahrain's Position as a Preferred Regional Destination for Weddings

Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) is proud to announce that the Kingdom of Bahrain has achieved an exceptional accomplishment by securing two coveted awards at the 31st World Travel Awards (WTA) ceremony.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has been named the "Middle East's Leading Wedding Destination 2024" award in recognition of its emerging position as a preferred regional destination for large-scale weddings and lavish bridal occasions during the last few years.

This remarkable victory underscores Bahrain's outstanding tourism landmarks and readiness to host spectacular grand celebrations, solidifying its status as the ideal location for large-scale weddings and festive occasions. In addition, Exhibition World Bahrain (EWB) has won the "Middle East's Leading Large-Scale Wedding Venue 2024" award, scooping the regional award over four esteemed competitors: Dubai World Trade Centre, Nayyara Banqueting & Conference Centre in Saudi Arabia, Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, and Qatar National Convention Centre.

This accolade highlights Exhibition World Bahrain's outstanding achievement in securing the highest number of votes among prestigious venues.

Mrs. Sara Ahmed Buhiji, CEO of BTEA, received the two accolades of "Middle East's Leading Wedding Destination 2024" and "Middle East's Leading Large-Scale Wedding Venue 2024" during the WTA gala ceremony, which took place at Burj Al Arab in Dubai, UAE, on May 6, 2024, on the side-lines of the Arabian Travel Market 2024.

Securing the title of "Middle East's Leading Large-Scale Wedding Venue 2024" follows Exhibition World Bahrain's winning title of "World's Leading New Exhibition and Convention Centre 2023" at the World Travel Awards in December 2023. This consecutive recognition fortifies the venue's standing as a premier global destination in the MICE industry, celebrated for its versatility, cutting-edge facilities, and innovative services that accommodate a diverse range of events.



## AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

### **Flynas Reports Record Operational Performance for Q1 2024 with 51% Increase in Passenger Numbers to 3.7 million**

Riyadh-2024: flynas, the leading Saudi-based low-cost carrier, announced outstanding operational results during Q1 2024, compared to Q1 2023, as it continues to deliver on its ambitious growth strategy and expand its fleet size to accommodate strong passenger demand.

In Q1 2024, flynas welcomed 3.7 million passengers on board its flights, marking an increase of 51% YoY compared to Q1 2023.

Flynas hit a record 43% YoY increase in overall seat capacity in Q1 2024, driven by domestic and international routes which were up 45% and 40% respectively.

Bander Almohanna, Managing Director and CEO of flynas, said: "The strong start to the year underscores the effectiveness of our ambitious growth strategy. By tapping into the Kingdom's economic growth and responding to increased passenger demand, we have successfully expanded our customer base.

Our progress is driven by leveraging exceptional talent, expanding our fleet, launching new destinations, introducing new products and enhancing our loyalty program. Looking ahead, we will continue building on our growth plans, through which we aim to connect the world with the Kingdom and support the development of the tourism and aviation sectors. We plan to capitalize on their growth potential by aligning with the National Civil Aviation Strategy and the Pilgrims Experience Program."

flynas plays a key role in delivering the Kingdom's National Civil Aviation Strategy, which aims to connect Saudi Arabia with 250 International destinations, accommodate 330 million passengers and host 100 million tourists annually by 2030.

During 2023, flynas launched 39 new routes to 18 destinations in 10 new countries and inaugurated its fourth operations base at Prince Mohammed bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Madinah. flynas operates more than 1,500 weekly flights to more than 70 domestic and international destinations.



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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**Are you ready for adventure? Join TATO's FAM trips and immerse yourself in the magic of Tanzania's wildlife and landscapes!**

The Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO), with over 300 members, has been a leading private association in Tanzania's tourism sector for over 40 years. With a mission to advocate for and represent its members, TATO encompasses a wide range of services, including safari, trekking, and beach tour operators, DMCs, various accommodation providers, airlines, cultural and unique activity experts, and other tourism-related enterprises.

As a new affiliate member of UN Tourism, TATO is committed to promoting sustainable tourism and supporting its members. One key initiative is organizing Familiarization (FAM) trips to showcase Tanzania's beauty and cultural heritage to the global tourism market.

In 2024, TATO is inviting travel professionals to explore Tanzania through two meticulously designed programs.

The 7-day and 10-day safari itineraries, available in mid-October, mid-November, and the beginning of December, provide a comprehensive exploration of Tanzania's iconic landscapes and wildlife.

Highlights include exhilarating safaris in the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater, as well as a stop at Africa's highest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro. An optional Zanzibar add-on allows participants to unwind on the pristine beaches of this exotic island, enriching their overall experience.

FAM trips offer travel professionals an exceptional opportunity to experience Tanzania's natural wonders and cultural richness, enabling them to effectively promote the destination to their clients.

Join our FAM trip to experience Tanzania up close. Visit [www.tatotz.org/fam-trips](http://www.tatotz.org/fam-trips) or email [famtrip@tatotz.org](mailto:famtrip@tatotz.org) to register and secure your spot today!



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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## Developing the European Tourism Crisis Management Framework: Supporting Destinations in Crisis Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

We are pleased to announce our collaboration with the European Travel Commission (ETC) to develop a comprehensive Crisis Management Framework for European National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). This project aims to analyze the impacts of various crises on the European tourism sector over the last decade and provide practical solutions to enhance destinations' preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

The tourism sector faces numerous challenges, including health concerns, security threats, natural disasters, and emerging risks like digital security and resource scarcity. Climate change exacerbates these issues, profoundly affecting European destinations. Through extensive research, including in-depth desk studies, case analyses, and expert interviews, we're crafting a Crisis Management Framework that will offer actionable guidelines for NTOs, helping them navigate crises and build resilience effectively.

To reinforce best practices, we are organizing workshops for CEOs of European NTOs to review the Framework and exchange insights. Our recent workshop in Kaunas, Lithuania, demonstrated our commitment to enhancing crisis management strategies for European NTOs.

We are excited to build upon our previous research projects with the ETC, such as the "ETC Study on Generation Z Travellers" (2020), the "ETC Handbook on Covid-19 Recovery Strategies for National Tourism Organisations" (2020), and the "ETC Handbook on Encouraging Sustainable Tourism Practices" (2021).

Get in touch should you wish TOPOSOPHY to support your city or destination on the journey towards social sustainability.

**TOPOSOPHY**  
PLACE MAKING & MARKETING AGENCY



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

## JTB Takes Part in Tokyo Rainbow Pride for the First Time

Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2024 was held in Tokyo, Japan in April. The accompanying Pride Parade celebrated its 30th anniversary in Japan. A record 15,000 people representing 60 groups took part, with the flotilla numbering 24 floats. The participants marched through Shibuya under the theme of “Don’t give up, change Japan.” The event attracted about 270,000 people in total, the highest ever. (Source: Official website’s News)

JTB takes part in the LGBT-Ally Project of OUT JAPAN Co., Ltd. The project aims to increase the number of allies in the LGBT community and operate with the theme of “We are here!! We are ally!!” Eijiro Yamakita, CEO of JTB Corp, and the other managing executive officers attended the event and dropped by the corporate booth. The initiatives of JTB were outlined on a panel that was displayed at the booth.

In the organizers’ words, Tokyo Rainbow Pride is an event that serves to embrace and celebrate the diverse spectrum of sexuality and life together with LGBTQ+ people and their supporters (allies). It provides a place to connect with the aim of bringing about a society where all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, can live the life of their own choosing without experiencing discrimination or prejudice.

We were reminded of the importance of promoting not only LGBTQ+ initiatives but also DEIB efforts after we experienced the event’s significance firsthand and saw the endeavors of many companies and organizations. JTB is not treating Tokyo Rainbow Pride a one-time event. Instead, as a company, we are looking to redouble our efforts in promoting gender equality and DEIB in a committed, serious manner in ways that are based on the DEIB statement of “Treasure the Difference, Bring the World Together.”



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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## Madeira Renews Certification as a Sustainable Tourist Destination

The Autonomous Region of Madeira has renewed its certification as a Sustainable Tourist Destination, second level of EarthCheck's Silver Seal, a process supported by IPDT Tourism.

From an early stage, Madeira has been following a consistent path towards sustainability, with focus on innovation. Over the last years, the region presented a wide range of pioneering projects and solutions that reflect concerted and collaborative work. Good examples include Oceanlit, Ecos Machico, Porto Santo Without Marine Litter, Madeira Circular, Digital Nomads Madeira, Inclusive Porto Santo, Fishmetrics, Strategy for an Intelligent Regional Economy, among others.

As part of the certification process, a series of benchmarking results were gathered to demonstrate the success of these and other initiatives:

- 33% of the electricity produced comes from renewable sources;
- 16% of the waste produced is recycled, reused or composted;
- 39 awareness-raising actions on the use of water in the agro-ecosystem;

- 1,325 electric cars purchased;
- 87 awareness-raising actions on gender equality;
- 35 professional internships in technology;
- 14 clean-up campaigns in Porto Santo.

With more than 9 million overnight stays, a bed occupancy rate of 62% and an average stay of 4.8 nights, Madeira's international recognition and notoriety is growing. For this reason, the destination will continue to work towards new achievements, with sustainability as the greatest commitment.

By 2027, Madeira aims to reach Gold level certification. IPDT welcomes Madeira's success and the long partnership with this unique destination. IPDT's expertise in consulting on sustainable certification projects for tourist destinations results from its vast experience and action to consolidate sustainability as a priority for tourism. The latest step along this path has been IPDT's appointment as EarthCheck Ambassador for Portugal, representing the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification and advisory group for travel and tourism.



**EARTHCHECK**  
SILVER CERTIFIED  
2024



# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

## Rainforest World Music Festival 2024

The Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) is an annual three-day music festival celebrating the diversity of world music, held in Sarawak Cultural Village, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia from 28th to 30th June 2024. Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) is thrilled to unveil this highly anticipated Rainforest World Music Festival is set to be a transformative celebration under the theme “EVOLUTION”. This year, the 27th edition of RWMF promises an immersive experience that transcends music, incorporating responsible tourism, cultural celebration, and environmental stewardship. RWMF is inclusive of daytime music workshops, cultural displays, craft displays, food stalls, and main-stage evening concerts.

The festival lineup features a diversity that showcases 68 international musicians from 21 countries alongside 63 talented local artists. This exciting amalgamation featuring a diversity of sounds and cultures promises to create a musical fusion like never before, showcasing the richness of global musical traditions right here in the heart of Sarawak.

Headlining RWMF is the Grammy and Golden Globe award winner Kitaro, a Japanese recording artist renowned for his groundbreaking electronic-instrumental music, who is bringing his Kitaro Live World Tour to the festival for the first time.

Next headliner is Malaysian-own multiple-award winning Dato’ Zainalabidin, known for his hit song ‘Hijau’ which has been around for over three decades. The Sarawak-born Belle Sisoski, a remarkable 18-year-old girl who was also the 2nd place winner with her song “Stop Your Games”, in the 2022/2023 Commonwealth Song Contest and Havana Social Club, a dynamic group that aspires to illuminate Asia and beyond with the vibrant rhythms of Cuba. Other international acts include Alright Mela Meets Santoo (Pakistan and France), Bourbon Lassi (Australia), Imarhan (Algeria & France), Krakatau Ethno (Indonesia), Nini (Taiwan), Rhythm Rebels featuring Selonding Bali Aga (Indonesia), Rizal Hadi (Indonesia) and Tribal Tide (Singapore) and many more artists.



**SARAWAK TOURISM BOARD**

The poster for the Rainforest World Music Festival 2024 features a dark purple background with a subtle pattern of rainforest trees. At the top, a colorful tree icon is positioned above the text "RAIN FOREST WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL 2024" in a large, white, outlined font. To the right of the main title is a small logo for the festival. Below the title, the text "CELEBRATES A YEAR OF" is followed by the word "EVOLUTION" in a large, colorful, stylized font. At the bottom, the dates "28-30 JUNE 2024" and the location "SARAWAK CULTURAL VILLAGE KUCHING, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA" are listed. The website "rwmf.net" is also present. At the very bottom, there are logos for the Sarawak Tourism Board and other supporting organizations.

## AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

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### **Zagreb Classic, June 22 – July 2** **Heavenly sounds under open skies**

Zagreb Classic open air festival is truly an experience for all classical music lovers. First-class musicians from Croatia and all over the world will perform the best of classical music from 22 June to 2 July for citizens of Zagreb and their guests, on a unique stage under the stars and one of Zagreb's most beautiful squares - King Tomislav Square.

The works of Croatian and international composers are performed for classical music lovers, and those who are about to become one, by the synergy of talented artists who performed on prestigious stages all over the world. But the one in Zagreb is, however, something special. Zagreb Classic is loved by many for the same reasons, though from different perspectives: because of the carefully selected program, beautiful ambience and that much important chemistry between the music, performers, audience and city atmosphere.

And one more thing: unlike the usual music halls, for this occasion you will wear sports or casual clothes and find your spot at free concerts on the grass. Enjoy sharing with others the experience of outstanding music in a truly special setting, overlooking the starry sky, beautiful flowers and the city lights. Being in the very center of the city, and yet, driven by music, you are so far away from everyday city life...

Zagreb Classic open air has been held since 2016, and among artists and music lovers it enjoys the cult status, further reinforced by this year's edition. All concerts begin at 9pm and the entry is free.

Find out more:  
<https://www.infozagreb.hr/zagreb-classic>

Welcome!





# AFFILIATE MEMBERS NEWS

## APPLIED RESEARCH SUMMER LAB (SL)

Organized by the Universidad del Caribe through the Interinstitutional Applied Research Center from Quintana Roo (CIIA-QRoo), with the support of UN Tourism Affiliate Members Department.

Cancun, in the state of Quintana Roo in Mexico, is a city that was born and grown by and for tourism, it is today the center of the most important tourism region in Latin America, and for this, it become a unique lab for learning about tourism. Additionally, the tourism environment and history, the activities of the SL are enriched by a group of experts professionals, and academics that share knowledge and experiences with their colleagues from near and the world in this space.

**Modality:** in person.

**Dates:** July 1 to 12, 2024.

**Place:** Universidad del Caribe, campus Cancún, Quintana Roo, México.

The event aims to: Develop collaborative the design phase of an applied research project in tourism: pre-project, problem, reference frame, hypothesis, questions and research goals, methodology, statistical sample and research tools.

**Activities:** during the “Summer Lab (SL)” will be offer:

- Workshops
- Conferences
- Collaborative sessions
- Thecnical visits

**Web page:** [www.ciiagroo.com](http://www.ciiagroo.com)

Registration format in web page.

**More Information:** [ciiagroo@ucaribe.edu.mx](mailto:ciiagroo@ucaribe.edu.mx)



CONOCIMIENTO Y CULTURA PARA EL DESARROLLO HUMANO

ONU Turismo  
MIEMBRO AFILIADO

CIIA  
CENTRO INTERINSTITUCIONAL DE INVESTIGACIÓN APLICADA

Universidad del Caribe  
CONOCIMIENTO Y CULTURA PARA EL DESARROLLO HUMANO

EVENTO PRESENCIAL

**LABORATORIO DE VERANO DE INVESTIGACIÓN APLICADA**

APPLIED RESEARCH SUMMER LAB (SL)

FECHA

**1 AL 12**  
DE JULIO DE 2024

TALLERES - CONFERENCIAS  
SESIONES DE TRABAJO COLABORATIVO - VISITAS TÉCNICAS

ORGANIZAN

Organizado por la Universidad del Caribe a través del Centro Interinstitucional de Investigación Aplicada de Quintana Roo (CIIA-QRoo), con el apoyo del Departamento de Miembros Afiliados de la Organización Mundial de Turismo, agencia especializada de turismo de las Naciones Unidas (AM UNWTO).

[www.ciiagroo.com](http://www.ciiagroo.com)

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The UN Tourism Affiliate Members Department is responsible for the management of the partnership between UN Tourism and the private sector.

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UNprecedented Perspectives  
by UN Tourism Affiliate Members