

# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### [1]

#### WHAT IS THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROGRAMME?

Launched in 2011, the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme works to facilitate the management and development of sustainable tourism at World Heritage properties, particularly by fostering the awareness, capacity and equal participation of local stakeholders. The goal of this programme is twofold: to protect World Heritage properties and their Outstanding Universal Value, while, at the same time, ensuring that tourism contributes to the sustainable development of local communities. With an approach founded on dialogue and stakeholder cooperation, the programme encourages World Heritage and tourism stakeholders to share in the responsibility of achieving sustainable development and in conserving our common cultural and natural heritage.

### [2]

#### WHY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

With over 1.2 billion people now crossing international borders each year, tourism is increasingly a major source of growth, employment and income for many of the world's developing countries. Data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) shows that tourism accounts for 1 in 11 jobs worldwide, represents around 30% of global service exports, and directly and indirectly contributes to around 10% of global GDP. Cultural tourism accounts for nearly 40 percent of world tourism revenues, with cultural heritage sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List often serving as focal points for job creation and local development. Tourism has the potential to contribute, both directly and indirectly, to all of the Sustainable Development Goals found within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 8 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, and SDG 14 on the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources. However, when mismanaged, tourism can put heritage at risk, undermining its potential for sustainable development. Overwhelming numbers of visitors can damage ancient monuments, and intangible heritage is at risk if not properly safeguarded. UNESCO's actions on tourism, therefore, works to safeguard heritage as the foundation for tourism that is truly sustainable.

### [3]

#### HOW DOES THE CULTURE SECTOR WORK TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

- i. **Policy advocacy and design.** Through the Silk Road Project, UNESCO is developing a common sustainable tourism strategy for visitor management and site presentation along the Silk Road. In 2016, UNESCO, in partnership with other entities and organizations, published World Heritage in a Changing Climate, which provides an overview of the increasing vulnerability of World Heritage sites to climate change and the potential implications for global tourism.
- ii. **Tourism management tools.** UNESCO has created a series of tools and how-to guides for sustainable tourism management, including the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit.
- iii. **Capacity building.** UNESCO recently organized a series of training workshops at four natural World Heritage sites in Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as at three sites in Southeast Asia with the UNESCO Office in Jakarta.
- iv. **Heritage journeys.** UNESCO and the European Union have launched the "World Heritage Journeys in the European Union" project, which aims to establish thematic tourism routes linking World Heritage sites across Europe.

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## KEY MESSAGES



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**UNESCO works to safeguard heritage** as a foundation for tourism that is truly sustainable.