The Silk Road: Unlocking the Tourism potential through collaboration

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...why tourism & travel...?
1.323 mln + 7% travellers
2017

**WHY TOURISM MATTERS**

- 10% GDP
- 1/10 jobs (Direct, indirect and induced)
- US$ 1.4 trillion in exports
- 7% of world's exports
- 30% of services exports

© World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) July, 2017
Tourism Towards 2030

International Tourist Arrivals (million)

- Trend 1995-2010
- Tourism Towards 2030 projection
- Actual 1995-2016*

- 1323 mn
- 525 mn
- 1.4 bn
- 1.8 bn

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
‘...the most important route in the history of mankind...’
The Silk Road is one of the world’s most powerful brands, perhaps even bigger than Disney or Coca-Cola. In my conversations across the region, whether speaking with a Chinese policy official or Egyptian taxi driver, simple mention of the Silk Road brings immediate recognition.

By adopting the concept to explain China’s own regional ambitions, President Xi Jinping has leveraged the brand at little cost. And his early November announcement that China would fund a $40 billion Silk Road Fund rightly caught news headlines around the world.

And yet trying to decipher the implications of China’s strategic ambition is less straightforward. What does it mean in practice?
...tourism & the Silk Road...
The Silk Road as the top ‘touring route’ (26.5%)
19 countries called for: ‘…A peaceful and fruitful rebirth of these legendary routes as one of the world’s richest cultural tourism destinations…’
UNWTO Silk Road Programme: 2010 - 2017

Silk Road Vision guiding the work of the programme:

- The Silk Road will be an internationally renowned, seamless travel experience
- The tourism sector will be prosperous across all Silk Road destinations, stimulating ongoing investment
- Silk Road stakeholders will work closely together for mutual benefit
- Tourism will drive improved cultural and environmental management
- Silk Road tourism will act as a vehicle for fostering peace and cultural understanding

Positive results obtained:

- 34 countries participating in the programme
- Strong public-private partnerships established
- Increased awareness of the Silk Road as a travel brand
- Tourism diversification, joint research, joint capacity building, tourism intelligence, etc.
Building the new Silk Road for Tourism

A collaborative platform aimed at fostering sustainable and competitive tourism along the historic routes.

3 key areas:

- **Marketing and Promotion**
- **Destination Management and Capacity Building**
- **Travel Facilitation**

+ **New:** SR Tourism Intelligence
34 Committed Member States

Why targeting the Silk Road Traveller?

Top Experiences – Ranking

- **61%** Explore ancient Silk Road cities
- **58%** Visit UNESCO World Heritage Sites on the Silk Road
- **44%** interested to try local Silk Road gastronomy
- **39%** Attend local festivals and events
- **39%** Visit art galleries and museums
Silk Road knowledge and intelligence through research and focused transnational and destination based projects
UNWTO/EU Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative

Exploratory Research on the Tourism Impact of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

UNWTO Silk Road Training and Capacity Building Programme

Silk Road Tourism Guides Training – UNWTO/UNESCO/WFTGA
THE WESTERN SILK ROAD TOURISM DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
Objectives

- Bring economic benefits to the local communities
- Take advantage of the special market of the Silk Road Traveller
- Diversify the tourism offer of destinations
- Offer unique experiences to the travellers
- Celebrate the invaluable shared Silk Road heritage through tourism

More on: [http://silkroad.unwto.org](http://silkroad.unwto.org)
UNWTO/EU Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative

- Research
- 2 Networking Workshops
- WSR Working Group
- WSR Tourism Academic Network

http://silkroad.unwto.org
Western Silk Road Roadmap: way ahead

- Provides overview of what has been achieved
- Lays forth a common tourism development plan

Main challenges:
- Lack of awareness about the WSR heritage
- Lack of research focused on WSR heritage
- Coordinated stakeholder approach toward common initiatives
• Offspring of the UNWTO/EU Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative
• Close collaboration with Academia
• Establishment of the “European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre” on 29 August 2017 at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh)

http://silkroad.unwto.org
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Why is Maritime Silk Road important?

Global framework: Belt and Road Initiative

Key research findings from a product development perspective
  - Product development opportunities
  - Challenges
  - Key indicators
Originally launched in 2013 and focused mostly on Asia

- Progressed to two global trajectories:
  1. The Silk Road Economic Belt
  2. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

- Both trajectories are closely linked, and evolving
- Visions and Actions document 2015 (five priorities)
- Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative 2017
“We should enhance cooperation in and expand the scale of tourism; hold tourism promotion weeks and publicity months in each other's countries; jointly create competitive international tourist routes and products with Silk Road features; and make it more convenient to apply for tourist visa in countries along the Belt and Road. We should push forward cooperation on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road cruise tourism program. We should carry out sports exchanges and support countries along the Belt and Road in their bid for hosting major international sports events.”

National Development and Reform Commission, China (2015)
Belt and Road: An evolving picture

- Other countries also investing in maritime route development
Investments will complement each other and present great opportunities for tourism.

- Heritage tourism
- Route development
- Cruise tourism
- MICE
- Sports tourism, marine activities
Private sector opportunities

Some areas of opportunity

- Accommodation
- Cruise
- Land-based services
- MICE
- Selling the Maritime Silk Road
Product development examples: Heritage

Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum, China
The Galeón Museum, Manila, Philippines
Product development examples: Heritage

Muziris Heritage Project, Kerala, India
National Maritime Museum, Galle, Sri Lanka
Product development examples:
Touring Routes

Zheng He Trail, Indonesia
Aim: implementation of a trans-national thematic cultural route of the Republic of Venice, also known as the Serenissima

Product development examples: Opportunities for Routes

VENETIAN ROUTES: ENHANCING A EUROPEAN SHARED MULTICULTURAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

verotour

MAP OF THE WORLD WITH ROUTES MARKED
Product development examples:
New ports, MICE & business tourism

Sihanoukville, Cambodia
Gwadar, Pakistan
MICE opportunities

- Port convention and exhibition centres (e.g. Tianjin, China)
- Linking in with heritage sites (e.g. Galle, Sri Lanka)
- Water-based activities (e.g. dinner cruise, Tokyo Bay, Japan)
Product development examples:
Sports tourism

Jakarta – Old Batavia

Palembang - Srivyjaya
Accommodation opportunities

Boutique accommodation
Singapore warehouse
Product development examples: Cruise tourism

- Growth of China, South East Asia cruises
- New cruise terminals, larger ships and deep water berths
- Ships designed for the Chinese market
- Boutique cruises around Maritime Silk Route countries
- Ground handling for cruises
- Activities for cruise excursions
Other private sector opportunities

- Food tourism related to the Maritime Silk Road
- Living cultural tourism
- Walking trails, discovery trails, etc.
Other private sector opportunities

- Endless opportunities for stories and experiences for both marketing and development

Welcome to the Birthplace of Jasmine Tea - Fuzhou, China.
CHALLENGES

- Maritime Silk Road not yet well known
- Managing cruise tourism
- Managing and conserving historic sites
- Overall destination management in and near ports
- Selling the Maritime Silk Road
Impacts need to be considered in economic, socio-cultural and environmental terms

- Every Asian country has recorded increases in international tourist arrivals between 2010 and 2017.
- The leading five receiving destinations were mainland China; Thailand; Malaysia; Hong Kong, China; and Japan.
- The leading source markets for Asian countries were other Asian (usually neighbouring) countries. The most striking performance in recent years has been the growth of the Chinese outbound market.
- Cruise ship calls at Asian ports rose 46% in 2016, and had an average annual increase between 2013 and 2016 of over 22%.
- The cruise industry created 10.9 million passenger destination days to Asia, compared with 7 million in 2015.
Socio-cultural & environmental impacts

- Ports tend to be robust destinations with long histories of socio-cultural interaction.

- Large cruise ships can present destination management challenges, particularly for heritage sites: Investment in visitor management and conservation needed.

- Large infrastructure developments inevitably have environmental impacts which require careful management.

- Initiatives like the Belt and Road Green Development Partnership have a role to play
Actions needed to realise opportunities

- Research: Tourism potential, historical and contemporary linkage opportunities.

- Marketing: Facilitating member countries and the business sector to cooperate in joint marketing initiatives.

- Destination management, greening development and capacity building: Sharing best practice.

- Impact: Sharing ways of measuring and managing the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism on maritime tourism destinations.

- Building partnership between Maritime Silk Road destinations.
Examples of areas that might be researched

- More detailed research into specific area or product (i.e. EU MSR ports, SR Tourism potential, historical and contemporary linkage opportunities for Ionic and Adriatic regions, Mediterranean cruises, creative industries, etc.)

- Investment opportunities related to tourism on the Maritime Silk Road

- Levels of awareness or customer satisfaction or concern relating to MSR products

- Benchmarking tourism development impacts, standards and systems between ports and tourism destinations
8th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism

October 9-12, 2018
Thessaloniki, Greece