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**Flagship initiatives 2026-2027****Executive summary**

In the Draft Programme of Work for 2026-2027 (document A/26/4(e) I), the Secretary-General refers to flagship initiatives, which UN Tourism Members and partners are invited to join, on a voluntary basis, in order to further strengthen the programme of work of the Organization.

The present complementary report gives further details on each of these flagship initiatives.

I. Introduction

1. In document A/26/4(e) I, the Secretary-General presents a draft programme of work for the biennium 2026-2027. In the draft, mention is made of special initiatives, called flagship initiatives, that are proposed to Members and partners for collaboration.
2. Such initiatives, some of which are newly designed, are available on a voluntary basis and aim at further strengthening the outputs and impacts of the programme of work of the Organization.
3. They are described in greater detail in the Annex to the present document, under each priority of the programme of work:
 - (a) [Priority 1](#): Building better and strong institutions: Policies, Legislation and Data.
 - (b) [Priority 2](#): Market intelligence, rethinking destination positioning and product development
 - (c) [Priority 3](#): Fostering sustainability and inclusiveness: circularity, climate action, and biodiversity. Reduce inequalities and promote culture.
 - (d) [Priority 4](#): Enabling economic growth, boosting investment and innovation: accelerating the uptake of new business models.
 - (e) [Priority 5](#): Investing in people: reinforcing education and training, strengthening human capital for decent work.

Annex: Flagship initiatives under the different Priorities of the Organization for 2026-2027

Priority 1: Building better and strong institutions: Policies, Legislation and Data

Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ¹ (Yes/No)	XB ² (Yes/No)	SDGs
TIPS - TOOLKIT OF INDICATORS FOR PROJECTS This flagship initiative aims to ensure the widespread adoption and successful implementation of the Toolkit, which can be applied to various tourism activities, serves as a requirement for development partners, at the local, national and international level, while influencing key stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public to embrace sustainable tourism practices aligned with the SDGs. This initiative is founded on the following strategic objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New metrics for tourism and development aid: Catalyse increased Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Aid for Trade flows from the donor community. - Global Awareness and Adoption: Raise global awareness about the TIPs Toolkit, ensuring that tourism stakeholders worldwide recognize its value in promoting sustainable tourism aligned with the SDGs. - Partnerships and Collaboration: Foster collaboration and partnerships among tourism organizations, governments, and other stakeholders to drive sustainable tourism initiatives and amplify the impact of the TIPs Toolkit. - Policy Influence: Advocate for the integration of the TIPs Toolkit into tourism policies and practices at national and international levels. 	IRPA		Y	All
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT TOURISM (IY2027-TOURISM) Resolution A/RES/78/260 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 26 February 2024 proclaiming 2027 the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aims to position tourism as a key driver of sustainable development and global cooperation. - A/RES/78/260 recognizes the importance of international tourism in fostering better understanding among peoples everywhere, leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the strengthening of peace in the world. - As a cross-cutting activity, tourism can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including by fostering economic growth, alleviating poverty, creating full and productive employment and decent work for all, accelerating the change to more sustainable consumption and production patterns and promoting the sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, promoting local culture, improving the quality of life and the economic empowerment of women and young people, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and promoting rural development and better living conditions for rural populations, including smallholder and family farmers. 	Management, IRPA, all departments		Y	All

¹ RB: Regular Budget, from assessed contributions

² XB: Voluntary contributions

Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ¹ (Yes/No)	XB ² (Yes/No)	SDGs
- To facilitate the organization and implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders.				

Priority 2: Market intelligence, rethinking destination positioning and product development

Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ³ (Yes/No)	XB ⁴ (Yes/No)	SDGs
<p>UN Tourism International Tourism Futures and Forecast 2050 (2028)</p> <p>According to Tourism Towards 2030⁵, published in 2011, international tourist arrivals were forecast to reach 1.8 billion by 2030.</p> <p>Seventeen years after, it is high time to update UN Tourism's forecast in view of recent shocks and rapid shifts in the sector. This forecast provides a sound and reliable scenario for tourism planning and development globally and at the regional level.</p> <p>The UN Tourism Futures and Forecast 2050 aims to update the forecast of international tourist arrivals for the world and its six regions while building upon the foresight developed for the World Tourism Report 2026.</p>	MIPC		Y	All
<p>Global event: Tourism Shaping the Future 2028</p> <p>The constant changes in the sector require the development and exchange of evidence-based knowledge on what megatrends are affecting our economies and societies and how these shape the tourism sector transformation.</p> <p>The Tourism Shaping the Future Event aims to position UN Tourism at the forefront of discussing megatrends in and impacting the tourism sector. From changes in consumers to new segments and markets, this Global Event is envisaged to bring tourism face to face with the biggest changes and challenges in the world.</p>	MIPC		Y	All

³ RB: Regular Budget, from assessed contributions

⁴ XB: Voluntary contributions

⁵ World Tourism Organization (2011), *Tourism Towards 2030 / Global Overview - Advance edition presented at UNWTO 19th General Assembly - 10 October 2011*, UNWTO, Madrid,

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Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ³ (Yes/No)	XB ⁴ (Yes/No)	SDGs
<p>World Tourism Report 2nd Edition (2028):</p> <p>The <i>World Tourism Report</i> was approved through resolution A/RES/757(XXV) as one of UN Tourism's Flagship Initiatives in the Programme of Work 2024/2025 at the 25th session of the UN Tourism General Assembly in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on 16–20 October 2023.⁶</p> <p>This Flagship Initiative falls within the priorities of UN Tourism's Programme of Work 2024-2025 under "Priority 1: Enhance competitiveness: robust tourism statistics and UN standards, data and market intelligence, rethink destination positioning, and product development".</p> <p>In line with existing flagship reports by other UN agencies and international organizations, this report aims to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Benchmark countries' tourism performance and policy enablers; 2) Identify global tourism trends and serve as a foresight tool; and 3) Guide countries and businesses to transform governance and policy frameworks, as well as business models to advance sustainability and contribute to local prosperity and development. <p>It aims to create a first holistic approach to tourism analysis by bringing together performance and policies, and so build an assessment of countries' competitiveness, sustainability, inclusion and resilience in tourism by focusing on the following four pillars: People, Planet, Prosperity and Governance.</p> <p>The <i>World Tourism Report</i> will consist of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. A global tourism policy and performance benchmark ii. Tourism trends and foresight iii. Thematic focus <p>The first edition of the report has garnered important support and raised the necessary XB funding. It is currently in the final stages and is set to be published in Q1/2 2026. The development of this pilot research project engaged all UN Tourism Departments, UN Tourism Committees and a multidisciplinary Advisory Panel with nearly 30 experts in various fields.</p> <p>Subsequent editions are expected to be released every two years to monitor progress in tourism policy and performance.</p>	MIPC, with support from other ODs		Y	All

⁶ 25th session of the UN Tourism General Assembly held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 16-20 October 2023: www.unwto.org/event/general-assembly-twenty-fifth-session

Priority 3: Fostering sustainability and inclusiveness: circularity, climate action, and biodiversity. Reduce inequalities and promote culture.

Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ⁷ (Yes/No)	XB ⁸ (Yes/No)	SDGs
UN NetZero Facility: Innovative financing, from development aid to blended finance. Creation of a UN NetZero Tourism Facility led by UN Tourism with other UN entities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate the decarbonization of tourism, through adaptation and mitigation, by engaging the tourism sector in carbon removal. Unlock innovative investment opportunities and scalable funding, secure grants for de-risking investment in order to support adaptation and mitigation policy changes and help companies to adopting sustainable consumption and production models. Explore innovative climate finance to support the UN NetZero Facility replenishment 	IRPA		Y	13, 17

Priority 4: Enabling economic growth, boosting investment and innovation: accelerating the uptake of new business models.

Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ⁹ (Yes/No)	XB ¹⁰ (Yes/No)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote New Investment Frameworks, such as the Tourism-Oriented Economic Free Zones, as effective models to attract, retain, and scale up tourism investments 	IEI, RDs, ROs,		Y	8, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and launch a “Global Tourism Investment Sentiment Index” to capture investor confidence and perceptions and enable data-driven policy responses 	IEI, RDs, ROs,		Y	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop “Guidelines for Bankable Tourism Projects”, providing Member States and stakeholders with a structured framework to prepare investment-ready project proposals 	IEI, RDs, ROs,		Y	8, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Tourism Investment Platform: Development of an interactive digital platform highlighting investment opportunities at the local and regional levels. The initiative supports Member States in promoting tourism projects by providing clear, visual, and standardized information for potential investors. A visual proposal has been developed, pending budget approval for implementation. 	IEI		Y	8, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop regional reports with the investment trends in the tourism sector to support Member States with a regional perspective. In 2025, UN Tourism launched its first-ever regional investments report, focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean. Produced to give Member States a broader regional perspective, these reports analyse the latest trends in tourism investment across different markets. They enable governments and investors to identify opportunities, compare performance, incentives, and better position destinations within a global investment landscape 	IEI		Y	8, 17

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⁸ XB: Voluntary contributions

⁹ RB: Regular Budget, from assessed contributions

¹⁰ XB: Voluntary contributions

Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ⁹ (Yes/No)	XB ¹⁰ (Yes/No)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Tourism Investment Guidelines and Reports: Developing research initiatives to attract, promote and mobilize investments and encourage traditional investors and non-traditional investors to prioritize investments in tourism. Global publications on trends and new mechanisms are realized, as well as country-specific Tourism Doing Business – Investment Guidelines upon request of Member States. 	IEI		Y	8, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Innovation Challenges and Competitions: Over the past 7 years, 40 local challenges and global competitions have been organized to find solutions for global and local problems via entrepreneurs to provide continuous support to the Members States. 	IEI, RDs,		Y	9, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Tourism Tech Adventures serve as the flagship innovation forums of the Organization, designed to connect startups and innovators with investors, governments, and industry leaders across all regions. These events foster public-private collaboration by bringing together the entire innovation ecosystem—venture capital funds, business angels, corporations, and public institutions—through mentorship sessions, networking activities, and startup pitch competitions. By leveraging this dynamic platform, UN Tourism accelerates entrepreneurship, investment, and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies that advance a more sustainable and inclusive global tourism sector. 	EI, RDs,		Y	9, 17
<p>Implementation of the UN Tourism Agenda on Artificial Intelligence, via the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI Training Programme: The establishment of a structured capacity-building framework offering insights into the applications and implications of AI in the tourism sector, as well as guidance on the practical implementation of related recommendations. GPT for the Tourism Sector: GPT for Tourism Destinations uses official data from national and local tourism authorities to provide travellers with accurate, real-time information. It helps destinations enhance visitor engagement, promote local offerings, and support smarter, more efficient tourism management through AI-powered communication. 	IEI, RDs,		Y	9, 17

Priority 5: Investing in people: reinforcing education and training, strengthening human capital for decent work.

Outcomes/Outputs	Lead department(s)	RB ¹¹ (Yes/No)	XB ¹² (Yes/No)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp e-Learning courses powered by trained GPT technology: Accelerating the democratization of education by using one of the world's most popular apps, to reach everyone, everywhere, in areas with low connectivity and limited access to computers. Delivering AI-powered courses, giving learners real-time feedback with videos, quizzes, and readings on their own phones. 	IEI		Y	4, 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New International Academies in collaboration with UN Tourism: UN Tourism is partnering with Member States to establish International Academies, designed as centres of excellence for tourism education, innovation, and skills development. <p>These Academies provide affordable, high-quality learning opportunities at vocational, executive, and academic levels, aligned with global standards. AI and digital transformation are embedded across their teaching methodologies and content.</p> <p>The Samarkand International Academy of Tourism (Uzbekistan) is already operational, featuring state-of-the-art facilities and faculty trained by UN Tourism, with five additional Academies under development across regions.</p>	IEI		Y	4, 9

¹¹ RB: Regular Budget, from assessed contributions

¹² XB: Voluntary contributions