



Committed to Tourism, Travel and the Millennium Development Goals

Creating the right technology infrastructure is an essential ingredient in economic development, both for existing and new industries with significant growth potential, such as tourism, particularly in developing countries. In July 2006, UNWTO and Microsoft announced a Public Private Partnership to help countries leverage the opportunities offered by tourism, through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The partnership was created as part of both organisations' commitment to the Millennium Development Goals as a force to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development.

“This agreement is a huge leap forward for tourism-driven job creation, export income and capacity-building for the world’s poorest countries. It links Microsoft’s outstanding technology and solutions with UNWTO’s central role of advancing the sector as an instrument of development.”

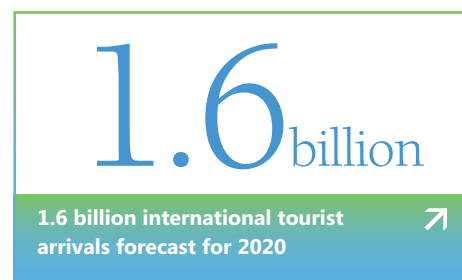
Francesco Frangiali,
Secretary-General of UNWTO

e-Tourism: Evolving Tourism through Technology

Tourism is one of the world’s largest economic activities. Every day over US\$2 billion worldwide is generated by international tourism alone. With almost 900 million international tourist arrivals recorded in 2007, the market is predicted to expand to 1.6 billion by 2020.

Technology, particularly information and communication technology (ICT), is playing an increasingly important role in the tourism industry. With over 1.2 billion Internet users and with over 2 billion mobile devices, the use of ICT tools is clearly becoming a competitive factor for both tourism destinations and enterprises.

This partnership is an investment to generate e-Tourism solutions and skills that will help UNWTO members in various areas. These include destination marketing and management, emergency response, responding to the challenges of climate change, ICT training, and safety and facilitation enhancement.





One of the fastest growing industries:
+6.5% on average international tourist
arrivals a year between 1950 – 2007 ↘

+6.5%

Tourism Solutions from UNWTO and Microsoft

Working together UNWTO and Microsoft are combining tourism knowledge and technical innovation to create a set of tourism solutions that leverage the latest technologies. These solutions are designed to help tourism managers and country authorities better leverage the opportunities offered by tourism and address some of the challenges they face.

Online tools and the Internet offer significant advantages over traditional means of communication. These include for example:

- Low-cost, high-speed transmission of information on destinations
- Possibility to integrate and analyze information from many different providers into a single portal
- Targeted destination promotion to specific online audiences
- Opportunities for promotion of small, local businesses
- Use of multimedia tools such as photos, videos, audio, and virtual tours
- Sharing of experiences between tourists with User Generated Content
- Facilitated administrative procedures for tourists such as immigration checks and visas.

The solutions will allow tourism destinations to address a variety of disparate needs which include the ability to: better promote and sustainably manage their destinations; create connections with travellers before, during and after their visit; facilitate travel across international borders while increasing security; and increase the tourism capacity and capability of the destination.

Key areas of focus include:

- 1** Tourism Destination Management and Promotion (integrated destination portal, online promotion, etc)
- 2** Building Tourism Capacity and Capability (training, support for small providers)
- 3** Destination Stewardship (sustainable tourism)
- 4** Tourism Facilitation and Security (E-Visa/E-Passport)

The solutions aim to enhance capability and capacity by tourism authorities. For example, E-Visa and E-Passport solutions can provide increased security for a country while streamlining the border entry process for tourists.

Benefits of E-visas include greater convenience for the visitor, increased security, greater efficiency for the issuing country and greater oversight for the government, in particular in cash management and reduced accounting procedures.

US\$2 billion

Over US\$2 billion a day generated by
international tourism ↗

One of the advantages of the approach is that the solution set can be adjusted and applied to meet the specific needs of any destination. Countries can implement solution areas separately or in any combination suited to their environment. However, it is through the implementation of the approach as a whole, that the greatest impact will be realised.

SOS.travel

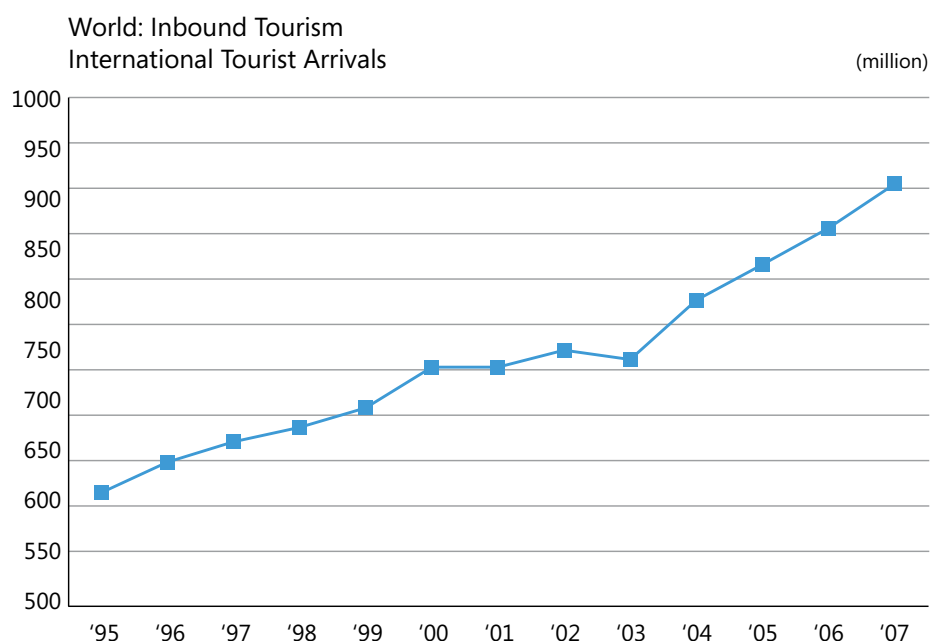
UNWTO and Microsoft have cooperated on the development of an emergency response system. The SOS.travel portal is a mechanism for public information sharing and rapid messaging that can help bring order and save lives during natural or man-made crises.

SOS.travel is a one-stop shop emergency platform that combines a range of existing networks that offer elements of important crisis information, including hotel, airline, cruise ship and travel bureau communications, which are all being centralised into one Emergency Response 'dashboard'.



This technology will allow the tourism sector to recover faster from a crisis and will improve the well being of travellers and mitigate the impact of man-made and natural disasters on tourism.

The emergency response portal, which will host SOS.travel, was officially launched at the World Travel Market in November 2006. One of its top priorities is to facilitate a group of leading tourism associations and international organizations known as the Tourism Emergency Response Network (TERN) to communicate crisis related efforts on avian flu, that will be expanded to other crises.



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)©



UNWTO

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that plays the central and decisive role for tourism policy and issues.

UNWTO aims to promote and develop responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace and prosperity through instruments such as the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, paying particular attention to developing countries.

UNWTO developed the Davos Declaration process to ensure the tourism sector responds to the imperative of climate change and poverty alleviation.

Membership of UNWTO comprises 153 States, 7 Territories and over 350 affiliate members.

Microsoft

Microsoft's approach to public private partnerships is competence-based. By bringing the core resources, solutions, know-how and time of the company and its employees to the table, Microsoft believes it can help partners address their challenges and meet their specific needs.

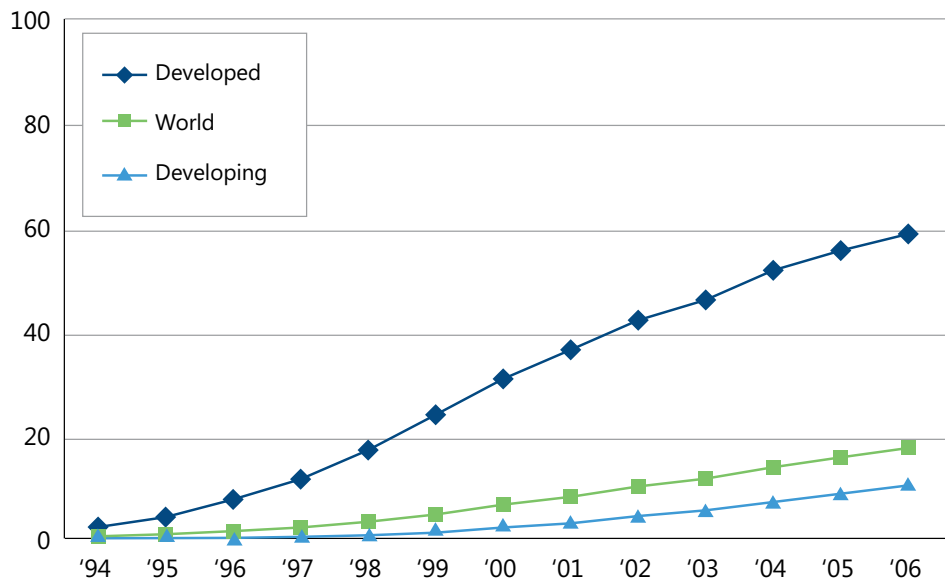
Partnership projects are closely aligned with Microsoft Unlimited Potential, a global commitment to help close the digital divide by making technology available to the estimated 5 billion people that currently do not have access to technology. The goal is to reach the first 1 billion people by 2015.

Microsoft Unlimited Potential is focused on three key drivers: transforming education, fostering local innovation and enabling jobs and opportunities.

1.2 billion

From 117 million internet users in 1997 to over 1.2 billion today

Internet users per 100 inhabitants, 1994-2006



Source: International Telecommunications Union



For further information: etourism@UNWTO.org

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