IURC-CHINA WEBINAR | Tourism & Culture in Green and Digital Transition

04 March 2022

This webinar sought to discuss how cities and regions achieve green and digital transformation and resilience of the tourism & culture sector.

Yangzhou

The historical city Yangzhou, known for its canals and exquisite cuisine, has made efforts to strengthen the green development of cultural tourism. Fangxiang Town has been selected as a **national rural tourism** village and the 2021 International Horticulture Expo showcased the importance of horticulture and greening for future urban planning and the development of sustainable lifestyles.

Future perspectives on cooperation with Europe include:

- Cultural exchange activities
- Joint online and offline tourism programmes
- Learning of international standards in tourism and related services

Bielsko-Biala

Bielsko-Biala shared its best practices on **digitalization** of the tourism sector. Through modern 2D, 3D and virtual technology, innovative projects have been carried out.

The **goals** of digitalization projects:

- Preserving valuable cultural assets
- Increase tourist attractiveness
- Develop sustainable solutions
- Unite common culture and cultural assets and heritage

Cooperation potentials lie in:

- Organizing partnering festivals
- Common promotion and project development of Active Tourism
- Preservation of cultural heritage

Strategies for Smart and Sustainable Tourism

1. Implementing the regulations in environmental objectives, digitalization

2. Tackling the specific local challenges, e.g., climate mitigation and adaptation needs, the infrastructure needed to improve sustainability, pressures on biodiversity, water resources or pollution

3. Focus on specific local strengths: natural resources, cultural heritage and the potential to provide unique and authentic tourism experiences

4. Inclusiveness and accessibility, including for persons with disabilities

5. Supporting SMEs and cultural & creative industries in their key role in the tourism ecosystem

"Europe looks at tourism in a more holistic manner, Chinese cities are well-advanced particularly in digital transition. There is potential for fruitful cooperation between the EU and China."

– Frank Schmiedel
First Counsellor of the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) in EU Delegation to China

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Case studies for green and digital transformation of the tourism & culture sector

Beijing

The city presented the digital platforms: "**Beijing Tourism Expert"**, "**Beijing Trade Connect B2B Hub",** and **"Webinars and online Roundtables"**, with e-learning resources, trade information and suggestions. Official digital certificates are being awarded, to enhance the quality and digitalization of tourism.
Example of the Forbidden City marketing matrix
- Digital marketing through social media
- Video marketing
- Integration of online and offline methods

Beijing also focuses on the development of a **sharing economy** in the tourism industry.

Ioannina

This city has gained experience in establishing modern information platforms and cooperation between private organizations and municipal institutions.

Digital applications in tourism development
- Virtual guided tours
- Online Campaigns / SEM

Additionally, sustainable business tourism is being promoted by establishing a **Green Science and Technology Park**.

Chengdu

Chengdu presented its best practices on the development of **Tianfu Digital Cultural and Creative City**, which aims to put new innovations and green development into practice.
The ecological environment is important in the design of the area, as well as creating a **smart city**,

Cooperation perspectives
- Nature-based solutions for urban development
- Support enterprises in the innovative ecosystem
- Develop smart living communities

Region of Valencia

Valencia was appointed as **European Capital of Smart Tourism** in 2022 for its efforts to promote smart tourism, networking and the development of innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism.

The focus cooperation areas:

1. Improving sustainable and climate-consciousness
2. Inclusive and accessible tourism
3. Business opportunities of digital tourism

Kunming

Kunming has broad experience in creating **digital solutions**, such as cloud services, online marketing platforms, intelligent application scenarios and virtual reality displays. These developments concentrate on media, supply and demand.

Potential cooperation areas
- Cultural exchange
- Joint tourism program
- Introducing international top brands in culture and tourism industry

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Case studies for the balance between tourism, cultural heritage, and creativity

Santiago de Compostela

This city leads the **BODAH** project, which stands for Big and Open Data for the development of new processes towards Atlantic Heritage management.

Objectives
- Stimulating innovation and competitiveness
- Strengthening the **transfer of innovation** to facilitate the emergence of new products, services and processes
- Promote research and innovation activities in public research centers and centers of competence including networking

Development of **transnational** knowledge and strategy is of key importance, just as the identification of good international practices.

Haikou

Three core concepts dominate Haikou's vision on how to boost sustainable tourism development and attract innovation and creation:

1. **Cultural heritage** protection and promotion
2. **Intangible cultural heritage** protection
3. **Exchange** of cultural relics and **artworks**

In order to achieve a balance between tourism, cultural heritage and creativity, several projects and policies have been created.

Cooperation potentials
- Sharing knowledge on best practices
- Identifying local initiatives
- Supporting technical innovations
- Developing international standards and frameworks

A greener, more digital and more resilient tourism ecosystem has synergies with the sectors:

1. **Aerospace** for space data-based services and applications.
2. **Agri-food** for improving food systems and services, creating reliable local supply chains and reducing food waste
3. **Construction** for building and renovating more sustainable and resilient tourism infrastructures
4. **Cultural and creative industries** for developing innovative tourism based on cultural heritage, traditions, arts and authentic cultural experiences
5. **Digital industries** for developing digitalized processes, use of AI and new technologies, empowering consumers' sustainable choices and data-based innovative tourism services
6. **Health** for ensuring access to healthcare
7. **Mobility, transport and automotive** for developing sustainably and reducing emissions
8. **Proximity, Social economy and Civil security** for platform-based services and providing local transportation, food, and cultural and active tourism experiences.
9. **Retail** for providing more sustainable and quality shopping opportunities and contributing to the livelihood and attractiveness of tourist areas
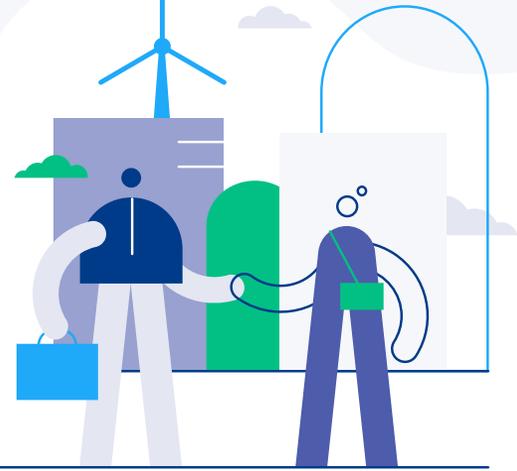
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Case studies for the balance between tourism, cultural heritage, and creativity

Nuovo Circondario Imolese/Bologna

Best practices of this Italian region include the *Joint Green Design Research Center Imola-China*, the creation of a network of **urban parks**, the structural conservation of compositional biodiversity and creating innovative ideas on connecting culture and nature in cities.

Areas for international cooperation
- Nature based solutions, ecological transition and Green Deal
- Smart and sustainable cities with **technology and culture** as pillars
- Green design and automotive research center

Liuzhou

Liuzhou has experience with boosting tourism through **cultural heritage**.

The city strives to
1. Safeguard and pass on **intangible cultural heritage**
2. Stimulate cultural **creativity** to design new intangible heritage IP
3. Develop cultural heritage tourism products
4. Establish a cultural tourism city

Western Greece Region

The region shared its good practices on tourism, culture, creativity and entrepreneurship. This comprises **political commitment** to strengthening the creative industry and culture in the area, supporting creative enterprises, encouraging smart specialization and the use of **big and open data** to improve tourism management.

Cooperation proposal
- Promote **cultural and creative regional ecosystems**
- Share best practices on **cultural heritage**
- Develop tourism **management** through technology

Opportunities
"Digitalization creates new models and forms of businesses. Digital solutions and the use of big data can help us achieve the transition to a green, digital and resilient tourism and culture sector."

- Kunming

"Europe and China both have long-standing cultural and culinary experiences to discover and to share. There is no better way to overcome prejudice and expand the mind than to travel and share. We need this more than ever."

– Frank Schmiedel

First Counsellor of the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) in EU Delegation to China

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Zhengzhou

Zhengzhou's strong point is education to foster science and technology. Combined with rich cultural heritage, education teaches people to become more creative.

The city hosted the **2021 China's International Mayor's Forum** on Tourism to discuss sustainable urban tourism and share knowledge and solutions on the subject.

Cooperation areas
- Cultural tourism exchange
- Research and development
- Sustainable tourism innovation

Murcia

Murcia has successfully developed **concrete action plans** to achieve green and digital transformation and resilience of the tourism and cultural sector.

1. *Street invasion, atomization and cultural reactivation*
revising public space, incentivizing peri-urban areas for culture consumption, structured public cultural procurement model

2. *Cultural hubs for innovation, modernization and enhancement (CHIME)*
strengthen production and innovation, support local economy and cultural offer, activate local networks

Lazio Region

Lazio region has experience with restoring and preserving rural heritage and landscapes, with the goal to promote sustainable and efficient tourism and cultural fruition of this important asset. The improvement of **rural tourism** has successfully been promoted through numerous enterprises.

Cooperation focus points
- **Rural tourism** and cultural-natural heritage
- Link rural development with **economic development**
- Policies and regulations on heritage restoration and preservation

Local opportunities
"Cultural heritage recovery is one way to develop sustainable and resilient tourism. Additionally, it creates opportunities to educate young people on their cultural heritage and link green cultural development to the local economy." – Lazio Region

Challenges
"The cultural sector is always hit hard in crises, so we must focus on post Covid recovery to make sure this sector does not die out." – Murcia

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