

Improving the Quality and Sustainability of Heritage Tourism in OIC Countries

**Enhancing cultural tourism with sustainable practices and
preservation**

25th Meeting of COMCEC Tourism Working Group

Ankara, 15-16 September 2025



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Ircica Architectural Heritage

Introduction

- Heritage tourism: a key pillar of tourism in OIC countries
- Distinct from other forms of cultural tourism
- Need for stronger links between tourism management & cultural heritage policies
- Goal: Balance benefits between tourism and heritage

POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

Governance and Sectoral Integration

Unified Governance Structure

Many OIC countries combine culture and tourism under one ministry to enhance policy integration and coordination.

Heritage-Tourism Imbalance

Heritage benefits tourism more than tourism benefits heritage due to limited cross-sector collaboration.

Sustainable Heritage Tourism

Promoting a self-generating cycle where tourism supports heritage preservation improves quality and sustainability.

Policy Focus and Alignment

Deeper policy focus and detailed tourism strategies are vital for aligning heritage conservation with tourism goals.

HERITAGE TOURISM OVERVIEW

Key Pillars and Scope of Heritage Tourism



Tangible Heritage Assets

Tangible heritage includes monuments, historic cities, and museums that showcase cultural history and identity.

Intangible Heritage Elements

Intangible heritage covers oral traditions, artistic expressions, and ceremonial practices that preserve community identity.

Natural Heritage with Cultural Significance

Natural heritage sites carry cultural importance and enhance the holistic experience of heritage tourism.

Integration and Preservation

Heritage tourism integrates diverse heritage types, emphasizing their preservation and visitor experience for success.

Heritage tourism = more than assets → shared memories & community consciousness

COMMUNITY AND MEMORY INTEGRATION

Role of Shared Memories and Community Engagement



Shared Memories in Tourism

Shared memories shape how heritage sites are valued and experienced by both locals and visitors alike.

Community Involvement

Engaging communities in heritage preservation ensures inclusive tourism development respecting local traditions.

Role of Guides and Experts

Specialized guides provide narratives that enhance visitor experience and contribute to cultural preservation.

Sustainable Heritage Tourism

Integrating community engagement is essential for sustainable development and preservation of cultural heritage.

Benefits of Heritage Tourism

- Showcases cultural identity
- Year-round visitors, longer stays, deeper cultural integration
- Supports intercultural dialogue & destination branding
- Encourages governments to invest in preservation
- Boosts education & service sectors
- Civil society involvement and joint OIC projects strengthen impact

IRCICA CONTRIBUTIONS AND CASE STUDIES



Heritage Site Restoration

IRCICA's case study on the Wara historical site promotes restoration and tourism development of lesser-known heritage locations.

Preservation Initiatives

Panels like the one on the Palace of Tiebele emphasize preserving historical sites to boost local heritage tourism.



Architectural Heritage Database

The Prince Sultan bin Salman database catalogs hundreds of Islamic heritage sites, aiding research and tourism promotion.

OIC - IRCICA
Prince Sultan Ibn Salman
Islamic Architectural Heritage Database

Islamic Architectural Heritage Database on Islamic monuments and sites which was launched under the generous initiative of H.R.H. Prince Sultan Ibn Salman, aiming to register and elaborate Islamic architectural heritage around the world, and by that way, to contribute to their preservation, promotion worldwide and economic development of the areas of the properties.

<https://www.islamicarchitecturalheritage.com/>

INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND GAPS

Challenges in Global Heritage Frameworks

Universal Heritage Norms

Global heritage tourism norms promote cultural protection but often lack focus on religious and sacred sites.

Representation Challenges

OIC countries face limited representation in UNESCO World Heritage due to selection and registration barriers.

Need for OIC-Specific Frameworks

Tailored frameworks can address religious heritage tourism and support international cooperation among OIC countries.



RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC
HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

TURKISTAN DECLARATION RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM



**STRATEGIC
PLANNING**



SUSTAINABILITY



**CULTURAL
HERITAGE**



**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**



**MONITORING
& IMPACT**

Balancing Sustainability Aspects

The declaration stresses balancing economic, environmental, and social sustainability in heritage tourism development.

Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging diverse stakeholders ensures responsible decision-making prior to large-scale heritage tourism projects.

Ethical and Sustainable Practices

Heritage and tourism professionals are urged to adopt ethical standards and sustainable business practices benefiting communities.

Pilot Studies for Impact Assessment

Pilot studies evaluate carrying capacity and infrastructure impact to support sustainable heritage site management.

Policy Recommendations

- Integrate heritage preservation with tourism development
- Actively involve local communities & religious groups
- Strengthen international cooperation within OIC
- Promote under-recognized heritage sites globally
- Develop OIC-focused norms for sacred and religious heritage tourism

Conclusion

- Heritage tourism = a driver for sustainable development
- Requires balance, inclusivity, community ownership, and adapted standards
- Call for stronger OIC collaboration and practical projects