Official Name: Protection and Promotion of Cultural Heritage of Punjab for Sustainable Tourism and Economic Growth

Communication Page Title: Punjab Tourism for Economic Growth Project

Budget: 1M$ – 5M$

Project Duration: 2018 – 2021

Official Logo of Donor:

Objectives:

UNESCO will contribute to the following outcomes of the project:

1. Provide a clear framework for the development and promotion of chosen sites to expand tourism sustainably.
2. Improved site management of selected museums and heritage sites, and long-term institutional reform.
3. The economic development of Punjab, by building capacity for effective management of heritage sites, development of sustainable tourism practices, and facilitating faith-based tourism.
4. Raise cultural awareness and foster respect for diversity.

This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- Goal 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and culture’s contribution to sustainable development.
- Goal 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
- Goal 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
• Goal 10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
• Goal 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.

**Actions:**

Contextual analysis of the chosen sites was an important preliminary activity for this project. The contextual analysis revealed some of the cultural and natural heritage that is connected to these sites, and which can be developed to benefit the local community and further enhance the tourist experience. The contextual analysis included looking into the history of each site, and the associated cultural narratives which have developed over the years, such as folklore, literature, dance, and other local traditions.

An important aspect of the contextual analysis was understanding the preferred routes taken by visitors who come to these sites for religious tourism. This knowledge will help develop appropriate site management systems.

The project is developing Integrated Site Management Plans (ISMP) for the chosen sites, namely Mankiala Stupa, Katas Raj Temples, Gurdwara Rohri Sahib, Gurdwara Sacha Sauda Sahib, Uch Sharif Monument Complex, two sites in Taxila - Bhir Mound, Dharmarajika and two museums i.e. Lahore Museum, and Taxila Museum.

A workshop on museum development was held in Lahore. The participants of the workshop included the curatorial staff from Lahore Museum, and curatorial and management staff from Taxila Museum, Harappa Museum, the Pakistan Army Museum and the National History Museum. During the workshop, the participants were introduced to different types of exhibitions, exhibition planning and development processes, understanding what makes a successful exhibition and the importance of the visitor experience in museum exhibitions.
A series of workshops and community engagement sessions are ongoing around the chosen gurdwaras in Punjab. Under the proposed ISMPs, capacity building workshops aim to provide foundations in cultural heritage protection and management through community involvement. The workshops focus on discussing the existing practice of heritage site management in Punjab, gurdwara policy frameworks, national laws and their implications on heritage tourism; cultural tourism and its impact on the economy; international best practices for cultural tourism and engaging communities; and techniques to improve sustainable tourism. The participants of the workshop include government officials, host community representatives and custodians, and religious community representatives.

**Expected Results:**

Religious heritage sites are sacred spaces, where communities live, work, and worship. Only then are they tourist destinations. The main impact of this project will be to develop tourism in a way that supports the safeguarding of these heritage sites. Activities that enhance the protection of heritage shall be promoted. Emphasis will be on inculcating tolerance and respect for diversity at every stage. Wherever possible the local community shall be to profit from tourism activities. Long-term planning shall be carried out to ensure focus is not only on immediate gains. The heritage site as a tourism product must ensure that there is a clear balance between the requirements and visions of the tourism sector and the need to safeguard the cultural heritage, the environment, and the integrity of the local community.