

### Reviving the Historic Silk Roads: UNESCO's new Online Platform



The term 'Silk Roads' refers to a vast network of land and maritime trade and communication routes connecting the Far East, Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent, Iranian and Anatolian plateaus, the Caucasus, the Arabian peninsula and the Mediterranean region and Europe. The incessant movement of peoples and goods along these routes resulted in an unprecedented transmission and exchange of knowledge, ideas, beliefs, customs and traditions over three millennia.

These peaceful exchanges between East and West, which have profoundly shaped and enriched the cultures along the Silk Roads, hold many valuable lessons for contemporary societies about the potential of intercultural dialogue.

In line with its mandate to promote mutual understanding, tolerance, reconciliation and peace through dialogue, UNESCO launched the Silk Roads Project in 1988. In close cooperation with a number of prestigious international partners, UNESCO organized a wide range of activities (e.g., field studies, expeditions, symposia, publications, etc.) to enhance our understanding of the dynamic cultural interactions that forged the diverse identities and heritages of the peoples concerned.

To take full advantage of the immense body of material accumulated during this ambitious project, UNESCO has recently launched a new online initiative, [the Silk Road online platform](#), to compile and disseminate this valuable knowledge for the benefit of academic, cultural and artistic professionals as well as the general public. Moreover, the online platform continues the Silk Road's tradition and facilitates dialogue, encounters and exchanges among authorities, scholars, artists, educators, tourism professionals, students and youth.

Regional and local communities from more than 55 countries will be involved in this collective endeavour by sharing and promoting their Silk Road archives, publications, photographs and audio-visual documents. Moreover, this platform is expected to contribute to fostering sustainable development within these countries by building national capacities for cultural industries and tourism, and enhancing the visibility of the countless historic sites, cultural events, festivals and traditions that abound along the historical Silk Roads.

This initiative has been launched thanks to the generous support of the Governments of Kazakhstan and Germany. To ensure the continuation of Silk Road Online Platform, additional funding is being sought. UNESCO welcomes contributions from Member States and private donors.

- [UNESCO Integral Study of the Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue](#)
- [Recommendations for transnational heritage corridors of Silk Roads site nomination](#)
- [Caravanserais](#)
- [History of civilizations of Central Asia](#)

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/dialogue/routes-of-dialogue/silk-road/>