



รายงานการวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์

จุดยืนภาพลักษณ์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของกลุ่มประชาคมเศรษฐกิจ
อาเซียน กรณีศึกษาของประเทศเวียดนาม และประเทศกัมพูชา

ASEAN Image Positioning:

The Case Study of Vietnam and Cambodia

โดย อารีย์ ทรสัตยาพิทักษ์

สิงหาคม 2552

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ผู้วิจัย

อารีย์ ติรสัตยาพิทักษ์

สังกัด

มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

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International Cooperation Department of Institute for Tourism Development Research, Vietnam tourism in Ho Chi Minh City, OSC Travel (S.M.I. Group) Co.,Ltd in Vietnam, Area-Based Tourism Research Center for Sustainable Tourism Development, the Thailand Research Fund and Mr. Tran Phu Cuong, Coordinator of Vietnam Human Resources Development in Tourism Project, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

As a part of ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Sub-region partnership for regional tourism development, the current practice of tourism in Vietnam and Cambodia emphasizes mostly on the mono-country development with the competitive economic structure rather than complementary. The progressive growth of tourism generates many forms of tourism-related businesses to satisfy the tourist's demand as much as possible, especially in the core tourist destinations. Since the tourism management, planning and development strategies in Vietnam, Cambodia and other member countries of ASEAN are focused primarily towards marketing and guest emphasized tactics (Choibamroong, 2005), the ASEAN tourism is critical in terms of tourism authenticity and loss of destination identity. It is worthy to note that Vietnam and Cambodia offer similar tourism resources. The package tours are not wide-ranging. The competition in tourism industry between these two newborn destinations is becoming more serious when they offer comparable stereotype of tourism products. As a consequence, this results a similar tourism image positioning in marketing scheme in the tourists' perceptions for these two countries.

To harmonize the mutual benefits in tourism and to lessen the high degree of business competition due to standardization of tourism products and tourism image positioning of countries offered to the potential targets, the research was designed to review and identify the distinctive identities of Vietnam and Cambodia of how they should differentiate the image positioning and promotional theme of their tourism products and, thereby, to project and launch the promotional theme of tourism products as an assortment of country's highlighted facet. This would support and enhance the global image of ASEAN tourism as one single destination with many-sided tourism characteristics available.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study and investigate the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia towards the SWOT analysis;
2. To propose the image position for Vietnam and Cambodia;
3. To boost up the cooperative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia; and
4. To establish the data bank in tourism among the ASEAN countries.

Definitions of terms

1. Destination image is a distinctive message of mental impression or perceptions of a place, a product and experience with the destination. This is often a mixture of formation elements including attractions, scenery, hosts, cuisine, culture, peace, security and access.

2. Image positioning is what people think about or a perceptual position of any destination in people's minds. Image positioning depends on an understanding and attitude towards the destination. It can describe the market situation and set a destination differently apart from its competitors.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using qualitative research techniques. The research direction is comprised of review study of the documents concerned and the investigation of information sources including the public and private tourism-related institutions from Hanoi, Vietnam and Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This is to examine the perceptions and perspectives of the tourism industry on the image positioning and specific promotional theme of tourism products for Vietnam and Cambodia, tourist attractions related to the proposed promotional themes as well as threats and problems to collaborative networks between Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia. The focus-group meetings and the structured interviews of a

mix of questions both open and closed were used as the research tool to collect the primary data. Information was sorted into headed categories. Content was considered in relation to the study objectives and the conceptual framework. Results of the analysis were explained in descriptive presentation.

4. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Results

In conclusion, Vietnam and Cambodia adopted slightly similar strategic approaches in guiding development on tourism. Noticeably, Vietnam and Cambodia strategically use an aggressive mass marketing to increase the foreign exchange and number of arrivals. Regarding to the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on the current situation of tourism development in Vietnam and Cambodia, the growth rate of tourism development in both countries is gradually increasing. However, the major weaknesses and threats that still cause the unconstructive consequences on to tourism development are infrastructure, transportation, human resources, marketing and promotion and difference in standard quality of tourism products, services and prices.

From the study on the image positioning of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism, the concurrent tourism image position of both countries is similar to other regional countries. The study revealed that the symbol for promoting Vietnam tourism should prominently be the beauty of nature while the cultural and heritage prosperity should be the icon message for Cambodia tourism. To strengthen the image position of tourism in each country, Vietnam should convey the natural and cultural tourism as the most appropriate promotional theme for tourism while the cultural and heritage tourism will be the most appropriate promotional theme for Cambodia tourism. The presented attractions related to the promotional theme of the natural and cultural tourism include Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island, Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An, Danang - Myson, Ho Chi Minh City, the Mekong Delta, Sapa, Phan Thiet and Nha Trang. In Cambodia, the presented major attractions for the cultural and heritage tourism are Siem Reap Angkor Wat, Preah Vihear, Sombok Prey Kuh and Phnom Penh and surroundings.

In addition, the collaborative network between Thai researcher and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia to conduct cooperative activities in tourism marketing and development is still weak because of some several reasons such as the complicatedness in establishing the bilateral or multilateral collaborative networks between researchers and tourism business sectors, insufficient support from governments and problem of bureaucracy in coordination with the government bodies, lack of meeting and understanding between the researchers of two countries such as Thailand- Vietnam or Thailand- Cambodia and vice versa and also between Thai researchers with business sectors all countries, inequitable shares of funding and grants between Thai researchers and copartners and lack of statistic system and updated tourism data pool of information.

4.2. Recommendations

To achieve quality tourism and enhance the global image of ASEAN tourism as one single destination with many-sided tourism characteristics available to specific interests of tourists to experience during their vacation, the following processes could be undertaken to harmonize the mutual benefits in tourism and to lessen the high degree of competition for all countries.

1. The development of tourism product lines should be designed and developed in regard to the niche potential characteristics of tourism resources in each country.
2. Clustering of tourist attractions will help the country to share the resources pool when designing tour programs, increase the attractiveness of each destination and make the whole tour a significant and unique experience to visitors. The authenticity and sense of place should be enhanced.
3. There is an immediate need to carry out a complete inventory and assessment of the tourism resources both nature and culture in each country to identify those resources of significance that may or may not be developed for tourism.
4. Countries involved should promote two side tourist products as a destination.

5. Governments concerned should establish the collaborative tourism development plan and the bilateral cooperation to promoting tourism products and image as a unique destination.

6. Vietnam and Cambodia should endeavor to maintain their unique nature, culture, heritage and way of life and avoid to reproducing tourism products in neighboring countries.

Furthermore, to promote the more effective collaborative networks between Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia through cooperation and research in tourism marketing, destination branding and other tourism related fields, it is very important to give more opportunity to poorer countries and the following measures could be implemented to better enhance and boost up the relationships among all parties involved.

1. Trust and sincerity in mechanism for regional cooperation are required. Proper agreements among Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia should be sincerely developed to harmonize the atmosphere of tourism development in the region.

2. Governments have to strengthen the assistance, coordination and management of agreements both bilateral and multilateral for tourism cooperation.

3. An active mechanism for cooperation between authorities and researchers on tourism of the ASEAN region should be strongly encouraged.

4. Support for more active activities, new efficient roles and contribution from the ASEAN and Thailand Research Funds are decisively required and urged.

5. More marketing activities and research training among Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia should be regularly arranged in order to help each other transfer experiences in tourism marketing and promotion.

6. There should be exchanges of the study results of the research projects among Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia. This would help strengthen more enthusiastic contribution from all parties in collaborative networks.

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ชื่อนักวิจัย: อารีย์ ธีรสัตยาพิทักษ์

คณะกรรมการบริการและการท่องเที่ยว มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

E-mail Address: sukwan@phuket.psu.ac.th

ระยะเวลาโครงการ: 1 มิถุนายน 2549 – 15 สิงหาคม 2552

การศึกษาจุดยืนภาพลักษณ์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของกลุ่มประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียน กรณีศึกษาประเทศเวียดนามและประเทศกัมพูชา เป็นการศึกษาถึงความเป็นไปได้ที่ประเทศเวียดนามและประเทศกัมพูชาจะส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวของกลุ่มประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียนให้บริบูรณ์ยิ่งขึ้น โดยนำเสนอเอกลักษณ์ของประเทศที่โดดเด่น และสร้างความแตกต่างของจุดยืนภาพลักษณ์ทางการท่องเที่ยว รวมถึงจุดขายที่จะใช้ส่งเสริมและทำการตลาดสินค้าทางการท่องเที่ยว วัตถุประสงค์ในการศึกษาวิจัยนี้คือ เพื่อศึกษาถึงสถานการณ์ปัจจุบันในการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศเวียดนามและประเทศกัมพูชาโดยการวิเคราะห์จุดแข็ง จุดอ่อน โอกาส และอุปสรรคในการพัฒนา, นำเสนอภาพลักษณ์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศเวียดนามและประเทศกัมพูชา, ส่งเสริมเครือข่ายความร่วมมือระหว่างนักวิจัยชาวไทยกับภาคธุรกิจทางการท่องเที่ยวในประเทศเวียดนามและประเทศกัมพูชา และสร้างธนาคารข้อมูลทางการท่องเที่ยวของกลุ่มประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียน การวิจัยนี้เป็นการศึกษาวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยใช้เครื่องมือการวิจัยคือ การจัดประชุมเฉพาะกลุ่มกับตัวแทนภาครัฐและภาคเอกชนที่เมืองฮานอย ประเทศเวียดนามและเมืองพนมเปญ ประเทศกัมพูชา และใช้คำถามการสัมภาษณ์แบบมีโครงสร้างทั้งปลายเปิดและปลายปิดในการดำเนินการประชุม นักวิจัยจะพิจารณาเนื้อหาการวิเคราะห์โดยเชื่อมโยงกับวัตถุประสงค์และกรอบแนวคิดการศึกษา และอภิปรายผลการศึกษาโดยใช้การบรรยายเชิงพรรณนา

จากผลการศึกษา จะเห็นได้ว่าจุดยืนภาพลักษณ์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศเวียดนามและประเทศกัมพูชาในปัจจุบันไม่แตกต่างกับจุดยืนภาพลักษณ์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศอื่น ๆ ในกลุ่มประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียน ประเทศเวียดนามควรใช้ความสวยงามทางธรรมชาติเป็นสื่อสัญลักษณ์ในการประชาสัมพันธ์ส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว ขณะที่ประเทศกัมพูชาควรใช้จุดแข็งในด้านความรุ่งเรืองทางมรดกวัฒนธรรมเป็นจุดประชาสัมพันธ์การท่องเที่ยวในประเทศตน ดังนั้นเพื่อลดอัตราการแข่งขันทางการท่องเที่ยวที่ค่อนข้างสูงของประเทศในกลุ่มประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียน

ประเทศเวียดนามและประเทศกัมพูชาควรพัฒนาสินค้าการท่องเที่ยวบนพื้นฐานศักยภาพเฉพาะของทรัพยากรทางการท่องเที่ยวที่โดดเด่น การรวมกลุ่มแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเป็นอีกแนวทางที่จะช่วยเพิ่มคุณลักษณะที่ดึงดูดของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวในแต่ละประเทศ นอกจากนี้รัฐบาลของทั้งสองประเทศควรมีการวางแผนพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวร่วมกัน รวมถึงความร่วมมือในระดับทวิภาคีในการส่งเสริมประชาสัมพันธ์สินค้าการท่องเที่ยวและจุดยืนภาพลักษณ์ทางการท่องเที่ยวเป็นจุดหมายปลายทางท่องเที่ยวที่มีเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะ

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ABSTRACT

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Investigator: Aree TIRASATAYAPITAK

The Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University

E-mail Address: sukwan@phuket.psu.ac.th

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The study of the ASEAN image positioning: the case of Vietnam and Cambodia is the study to explore in detail the possibility of countries, namely Vietnam and Cambodia complementing each other through identifying the distinctive identities and mutually differentiating the image positioning and promotional theme of tourism products in the destination marketing. The major objectives of the study are to study and investigate the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia towards the SWOT analysis, to propose the image position for Vietnam and Cambodia, to boost up the cooperative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia and to establish the data bank in tourism among the ASEAN countries. The research was conducted using qualitative research techniques. The focus-group meetings with the public and private tourism-related institutions from Hanoi, Vietnam and Phnom Penh, Cambodia and the structured interviews of a mix of questions both open and closed were used as the research tool. Content was considered in relation to the study objectives and the conceptual framework. Results of the analysis were explained in descriptive presentation.

As a result, the existing tourism image position of both countries is similar to other regional countries. The symbol for promoting Vietnam tourism should prominently be the beauty of nature while the cultural and heritage prosperity should be the icon message for Cambodia tourism. To strengthen the image position of tourism in each country, Vietnam should convey the natural and cultural tourism as the most appropriate promotional theme for tourism while the cultural and heritage tourism will be the most

appropriate promotional theme for Cambodia tourism. To lessen the high degree of competition for all countries, the development of tourism product lines should be designed and developed in regard to the niche potential characteristics of tourism resources in each country. Clustering of tourist attractions will help the country to share the resources pool and increase the attractiveness of each destination and governments concerned should establish the collaborative tourism development plan and the bilateral cooperation to promoting tourism products and image as a unique destination.

Key words: The ASEAN, the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), positioning strategy, destination image positioning, Vietnam, Cambodia

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	I
Executive summary	K
Abstract (Thai version)	P
Abstract (English version)	S
Contents	L
List of Tables	S
List of Figures	T
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
<u>Section 1</u> Background and importance of study	1
<u>Section 2</u> Research objectives	6
<u>Section 3</u> Definitions of terms	6
<u>Section 4</u> Scope of the study	8
1.4.1. Scope of study issues	8
1.4.2. Scope of information sources	8
<u>Section 5</u> Research conceptual framework	9
<u>Section 6</u> Practical implications	9
Chapter 2 Review of literature	11
<u>Section 1</u> The theoretical background	11
2.1.1. Concept of destination positioning strategy	11
2.1.2. Concept of image development and positioning	16
<u>Section 2</u> General characteristics of Vietnam and Cambodia	19
2.2.1. Vietnam - the Country Context	19

	Page
2.2.1.1. Geography and natural resources	19
2.2.1.2. Climate	20
2.1.1.3. People, culture and religions	21
2.2.2. Cambodia - the Country Context	24
2.2.2.1. Geography and natural resources	24
2.1.2.2. Climate	25
2.2.2.3. People, culture and religions	27
<u>Section 3</u> Study of existing circumstances in tourism development	28
2.3.1. Trends in Tourism Volume of Vietnam	31
2.3.2. Trends in Tourism Volume of Cambodia	38
<u>Section 4</u> Tourism development agendas	44
2.4.1. Tourism Development in Vietnam	44
2.4.1.1. Overview of tourism development policies	44
2.4.1.2. Development orientation for tourism zone	46
2.4.2. Tourism Development in Cambodia	49
2.4.2.1. Overview of tourism development policies	49
2.4.2.2. Tourism product development strategies	54
Chapter 3 Research Methodology	57
3.1. Desk research	57
3.2. Selection of information sources	57
3.3. Research tools	59
3.4. Data collection	61
3.5. Data analysis	61
3.5.1. Categorization of general information	61

	Page
3.5.2. Content analysis	62
Chapter 4 ASEAN image positioning: the case of Vietnam and Cambodia (Results)	64
<u>Section 1</u> SWOT analysis of the current tourism development	65
4.1.1. Assessment of Tourism Development in Vietnam	65
4.1.1.1. Potential internal strengths	65
4.1.1.2. Potential internal weaknesses	69
4.1.1.3. Potential external opportunities	73
4.1.1.4. Potential external threats	75
4.1.2. Assessment of Tourism Development in Cambodia	76
4.1.2.1. Potential internal strengths	76
4.1.2.2. Potential internal weaknesses	79
4.1.2.3. Potential external opportunities	82
4.1.2.4. Potential external threats	84
<u>Section 2</u> Tourism product development and marketing	85
4.2.1. Opinion on the image positioning of Vietnam tourism	86
4.2.1.1. Attractions related to the major promotional theme of natural and cultural tourism	87
4.2.1.1.1. Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island	88
4.2.1.1.2. Hanoi	90
4.2.1.1.3. Hue	93
4.2.1.1.4. Hoi An	94
4.2.1.1.5. Danang – Myson	97
4.2.1.1.6. Ho Chi Minh City	100

	Page
4.2.1.1.7. The Mekong Delta	102
4.2.1.1.8. Sapa	104
4.2.1.1.9. Phan Thiet	107
4.2.1.1.10. Nha Trang	109
4.2.1.1.11. Phu Quoc Island	112
4.2.1.1.12. Den Hung	114
4.2.1.1.13. Thien Cam	116
4.2.1.2. Attractions related to the minor promotional theme of historic and cultural tourism	118
4.2.1.2.1. The Tay Nguyen Central Highlands	118
4.2.1.2.2. Dien Bien Phu	125
4.2.1.2.3. Quang Tri	127
4.2.2. Opinion on the image positioning of Cambodia tourism	130
4.2.2.1. Attractions related to the major promotional theme of cultural and heritage tourism	131
4.2.2.1.1. Siem Reap Angkor Wat	132
4.2.2.1.2. Preah Vihear	137
4.2.2.1.3. Sombor Prei Kuk	140
4.2.2.1.4. Phnom Penh and surroundings	144
4.2.2.1.5. Koh Ker	150
4.2.2.1.6. Phnom Da	152
4.2.2.1.7. Beng Melea	153
4.2.2.1.8. Banteay Chhama	154

	Page
4.2.2.2. Attractions related to the minor promotional theme of natural and cultural tourism	155
4.2.2.2.1. North Eastern Cambodia	155
4.2.2.2.2. Sihanouk Ville	159
4.2.2.2.3. Kampot	160
4.2.2.2.4. Koh Kong	162
4.2.2.2.5. Tonle Sap Lake, Siem Reap	164
4.2.2.2.6. Kampong Thom	166
4.2.2.2.7. Kampong Chhnang	171
4.2.2.2.8. Posat	172
4.2.2.2.9. Battambang	173
<u>Section 3</u> Collaborative networks between Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia	177
Chapter 5 Conclusion, discussion and recommendations	179
5.1. Conclusion and discussion	179
5.1.1. Explanation of the tourism development plans and strategies in Vietnam and Cambodia	180
5.1.2. Assessment of tourism development in Vietnam and Cambodia	181
5.1.3. Tourism product development and marketing	182
5.1.3.1. Opinion on the image positioning of Vietnam tourism	182
5.1.3.2. Opinion on the image positioning of Cambodia tourism	183

	Page
5.1.4. Threats and problems to collaborative networks between Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia	185
5.2. Recommendations	185
5.2.1. Tourism product development and destination marketing in Vietnam and Cambodia	185
5.2.2. Measures to boost up the collaborative networks between Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia	187
References	189
Appendix	200
Appendix A List of key informants who attended the focus group meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam	201
Appendix B Pictures of the focus group meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam	203
Appendix C List key informants who attended the focus group meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	205
Appendix D Pictures of the focus group meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	207
Appendix E Structure interview for academic focus-group meeting (Public and private tourism related institutions in Vietnam)	209
Appendix F Structure interview in Vietnamese for academic focus-group meeting (Public and private tourism related institutions in Vietnamese)	227

	Page	
Appendix G	Structure interview for academic focus-group meeting (Public and private tourism related institutions in Cambodia)	242
Appendix H	Minute of the focus group meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam	261
Appendix I	Minute of the focus group meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	266
Author's curriculum vitae		269
Article 1	ASEAN image positioning: Visit Vietnam	284
Article 2	Sohm Swaakokm: Khmer Empire as a must of Cambodia	297
Article 3	ASEAN image positioning: The case study of Cambodia	310
Article 4	ASEAN image positioning: The case study of Vietnam	338

LISTS OF TABLES

	Page	
Table 2.1	Total Arrivals to Southeast Asia	29
Table 2.2	The Average Annual Growth Rate of Countries in Southeast Asia	30
Table 2.3	The Growth Rate of Tourist Arrivals to the GMS 1995-2005	31
Table 2.4	Tourism Statistic Figures during 2001-2005	32
Table 2.5	Vietnam – Growth Rate 1990-2005	34
Table 2.6	Main Market Arrivals to Vietnam	36
Table 2.7	Purposes of Visit to Vietnam	37
Table 2.8	Means of Transportation to Vietnam	38
Table 2.9	Cambodia – Growth Rate 1993-2005	40
Table 2.10	Total Visitor Arrivals to Cambodia from January – May 2004-2005	41
Table 2.11	Forecast of international tourist arrivals to the GMS region (2010 and 2015)	44
Table 2.12	Strategic tourism zones for major tourism products	47
Table 2.13	Major Strategies for Tourism Development 2001-2005	52
Table 2.14	Promotional themes of tourism products and related attractions in Vietnam	90
Table 2.15	Promotional themes of tourism products and related attractions in Cambodia	132

LISTS OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1.1	The ASEAN Map	3
Figure 1.2	The Research Conceptual Framework	10
Figure 2.1	Map of Vietnam	21
Figure 2.2	Map of Cambodia	26

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

During the past decade, international tourism has been praised as an important and fastest growing element of the global trade and as a significant tool to hearten the economic development and to build up the wealthier society in all regions of the world. The member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) have well recognized the importance of tourism as an activity for the movement of goods and people, trade and business investment, human resource development and the raising of living standards.

After the formalization of ASEAN cooperation in tourism in 1976, tourism in this region has developed rapidly since 1980. Many member countries in ASEAN (as referred in Figure 1.1) including Vietnam and Cambodia push efforts to shift the development from an agriculture-based economy to a modern-oriented industrialized economy. Tourism is then a locomotive apparatus to help achieve such direction of development. Timothy (1998 as cited in Tirasatayapitak, 2005) notes that although ASEAN is considered to be the most successful international alliances among developing countries, the organization's achievements in the area of regional economic cooperation including tourism has been weak. Consequently, the ASEAN tourism integration cannot be subjectively established and accomplished if there is a lack of the sincere and serious cooperation among ASEAN member countries, the collaborative networks between tourism business sectors at national and international levels and the pooled data bank in tourism that could be possibly accessed and extracted for implementation in each destination.

As a part of ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Sub-region partnership for regional tourism development, the current practice of tourism in Vietnam and Cambodia emphasizes mostly on the mono-country development with the competitive economic structure rather than complementary. The prime policy of tourism development for Vietnam in the next five years is to develop tourism in a rapid and sustainable way, to enhance tourism promotion, to develop competitive tourism products with diversity, high quality and traditional cultural identity and to turn Vietnam into a sizeable tourism center in the region (VNAT, 199?). For Cambodia, the goals on tourism development are to ensure the development of tourism activities that meet the needs of local communities and respect the environment and the main direction offers priority to tourism investment and pro poor investment as core policies (MOT, 2003). Though the countries' tourism policy provides the statement of government's approach to sustainable tourism development, mass tourism is often the prime scene of tourism practice in the major tourist attractions of both countries. The progressive growth of tourism generates many forms of tourism-related businesses to satisfy the tourist's demand as much as possible, especially in the core tourist destinations.

Regarding the geographical aspects, Vietnam and Cambodia possesses their own unique culture, pristine tourist attractions and native customs. Since the tourism management, planning and development strategies in Vietnam, Cambodia and other member countries of ASEAN are focused primarily towards marketing and guest emphasized tactics (Choibamroong, 2005), the ASEAN tourism is critical in terms of tourism authenticity and loss of destination identity. Many package tours in both countries are tailored and proposed to the potential tourism markets. It is worthy to note that the two countries offer similar tourism resources. The package tours are not wide-ranging. The competition in tourism industry between these two newborn destinations is becoming more serious when they offer comparable stereotype of tourism products that generally comprise natural, historical and cultural attractions, local culture, the ways of life, native customs, religious rituals and shopping as the key ingredients of such

package tours. Modern facilities are well accepted by the developers with the expectation to show the potential and readiness in providing services at international standard level to tourists and are competitive with other destinations. As a consequence, this results a similar tourism image positioning in marketing scheme in the tourists' perceptions for these two countries.



Source: www.asean-tourism.com

Figure 1.1: The ASEAN Map

In reference to forces that enhance growth of tourism in the decade of globalization and environmental movement, the new tourists become more responsible, sophisticated and information-intensive consumer. Given that the information technology has been greatly improved, this driven force benefits tourists to investigate without difficulty the country information, choices and modes of travel, tourism products of each destination and options, which enhance the appeal and image of holiday taking.

Over the next few decades, the enlargement of the new tourist market is expected to increase rapidly and shifts toward the green paradigm. Some main characteristics commonly associated with the new tourists are green consumers, sensitive to local cultures, conscious of social justice concerns, more independent-minded and discerning, knowledgeable about environmental issues, prefers flexible and unplanned itineraries, carefully assesses tourism products in advance, searches for authentic and meaningful experiences, wishes to have a positive impact on the destination, motivated by a desire for self-fulfillment and learning and searches for physically and mentally challenging experiences (Weaver & Lawton, 2002). In addition, demographics and lifestyle diversity as well as the current trends of tourist motives such as to experience the environment, to meet local people, to understand local culture and the host country, to enhance family life, to rest and relax in pleasant settings, to pursue special interests and skills, to be healthy and fit, to feel safe and secure, to be respected and earn social status and to reward oneself (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998) will stimulate the increasing acceptance of multiple short holidays, the modification of travel patterns from group travel to the more possibility of Free Independent Tourist (FIT), the more frequent traveling and the desires to tailor their own tour packages according to their interests and preferences.

Consistent with the review of tourism development context, tourism business in Vietnam and Cambodia has gradually experienced the positive progress in terms of tourism receipts and tourist arrivals. At the same time, the tourism industries in both countries are not currently well coordinated. Proper image positioning of tourism and

precise theme of tourism products are not clearly and appropriately defined and promoted. Hence, strong and efficient support for tourism development from private and public agents is very much necessarily required. To harmonize the mutual benefits in tourism among all stakeholders involved and to lessen the high degree of business competition due to standardization and likeness of tourism products and tourism image positioning of countries offered to the potential targets, the research was designed to review and identify the distinctive identities of Vietnam and Cambodia of how they should differentiate the image positioning and promotional theme of their tourism products and, thereby, to project and launch the promotional theme of tourism products as an assortment of country's highlighted facet. In this way, the more brilliant outlook of country can be created to boost up possibilities and desires for tourists in designing their own alternatives for the voyage and a wealth of national tourism will support and enhance the global image of ASEAN tourism as one single destination with many-sided tourism characteristics available to specific preferences and interests of tourists to experience in a single travel package.

Building upon the reviews of background and rationale above, a case study of Vietnam and Cambodia was examined. The following research problems were investigated:

1. What is the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia?
2. What is the existing image position of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism?
3. What are the threats and problems of the collaborative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia?
4. What measures could be undertaken to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia?

SECTION 2: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study explored in detail the considerable aspects facing the current situation of tourism development in Vietnam and Cambodia. In particular, Vietnam tourism and Cambodia tourism were examined in the international context as ASEAN member countries. The major objectives of this research are summarized as follows:

1. To study and investigate the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia towards the SWOT analysis;
2. To propose the image position for Vietnam and Cambodia;
3. To boost up the cooperative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia; and
4. To establish the data bank in tourism among the ASEAN countries.

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The essential key words relevant to the research which were used in this study and their definitions are clarified below:

- 1.3.1. **The ASEAN** is defined as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations comprising of 10 member countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. The goals of this Association are to re-affirm the friendship, the cooperative peace and shared prosperity among member countries.
- 1.3.2. **The Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)** is defined as the sub-region adjacent to the Mekong River, comprising the five countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and two provinces of China namely Yunnan Province (Yunnan) and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (Guangxi).

- 1.3.3. **Tourism development** is defined as the improvement of a destination's attractiveness to tourists towards the process of planning, building and management of tourism attractions, accommodations, transportation system, services and facilities.
- 1.3.4. **Destination positioning strategy** is defined as a creative marketing tool to underpin the perceived position against competitors with a personality of an identifiable product, service, person, attractions, the price structure, the promotional mix and the advertising and unique added values in the tourist's minds. Destinations will usually position their promotional themes and brands on the key benefits and added values that they could offer better than competitors.
- 1.3.5. **Destination image** is defined as a distinctive message of mental impression or perceptions of a place, a product and experience with the destination. This is often a mixture of formation elements including attractions, scenery, hosts, cuisine, culture, peace, security and access.
- 1.3.6. **Image formation** is defined as a formation of any information or mental picture of places that could be received from media, advertisements and word of mouth or from actual visitation.
- 1.3.7. **Destination image positioning** is defined as what people think about or a perceptual position of any destination in people's minds. Image positioning depends on an understanding and attitude towards the destination. It can describe the market situation and set a destination differently apart from its competitors.

SECTION 4: SCOPE OF THE STUDY

To achieve the successful completion of the objectives, some limits were placed on the study to make it manageable as follows:

1.4.1. Scope of study issues

Vietnam and Cambodia are claimed as newborn and unique tourist destinations in the ASEAN for tourists to experience their glorious civilizations and environments. Tourism in Vietnam and Cambodia has verified the potential to achieve rapid tourism development though they are experiencing a growing gap in marketing management and tourism development. To harmonize the mutual benefits in tourism among all stakeholders involved and to lessen the high degree of business competition due to standardization and likeness of tourism products and tourism image positioning of countries offered to the potential targets, the researcher primarily focused on examining the existing physical characteristics, the potential tourism resources, the existing image position of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism and the current situation of tourism development of these two countries as well as threats and problems of the collaborative networks in tourism business sectors as main issues of study.

1.4.2. Scope of information sources

This project examined the study areas from the micro-level during the duration of eight months (May 2006 - January 2007). The researcher investigated the perceptions and perspectives of the tourism industry on the image positioning and specific promotional theme of tourism products for Vietnam and Cambodia. The population of interest used for this study in the two countries was defined as public and private tourism-related institutions.

SECTION 5: RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study has been designed to examine the possibility of countries complementing each other through identifying the distinctive identities and mutually differentiating the image positioning and promotional theme of tourism products in the practice of destination marketing. During the process of study, the existing situation of tourism development and the existing image positioning of Vietnam and Cambodia, the tourism development plans and management strategy and the industry's perspective on the current tourism development were analyzed. In addition, principles of marketing management are used in the study in order to propose the appropriate promotional theme of tourism products that could lessen the high degree of business competition in the ASEAN tourism industry due to standardization and likeness of tourism products and tourism image positioning of countries offered to the potential targets. The conceptual framework for the study is presented in Figure 1.2.

SECTION 6: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1.6.1. To establish more efficient direction of tourism product development and image positioning in Vietnam and Cambodia in order to lessen the high degree of business competition and enhance the global image of ASEAN tourism as one single destination with many-sided tourism characteristics available to specific preferences and interests of tourists to experience in a single travel package.

1.6.2. To identify the potential tourism resources for developing the proper image positioning of tourism and precise promotional theme of tourism products for Vietnam and Cambodia.

1.6.3. To reflect the precise image positioning and promotional theme of tourism products as well as the recommended attractions and destinations for use in the context of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism.

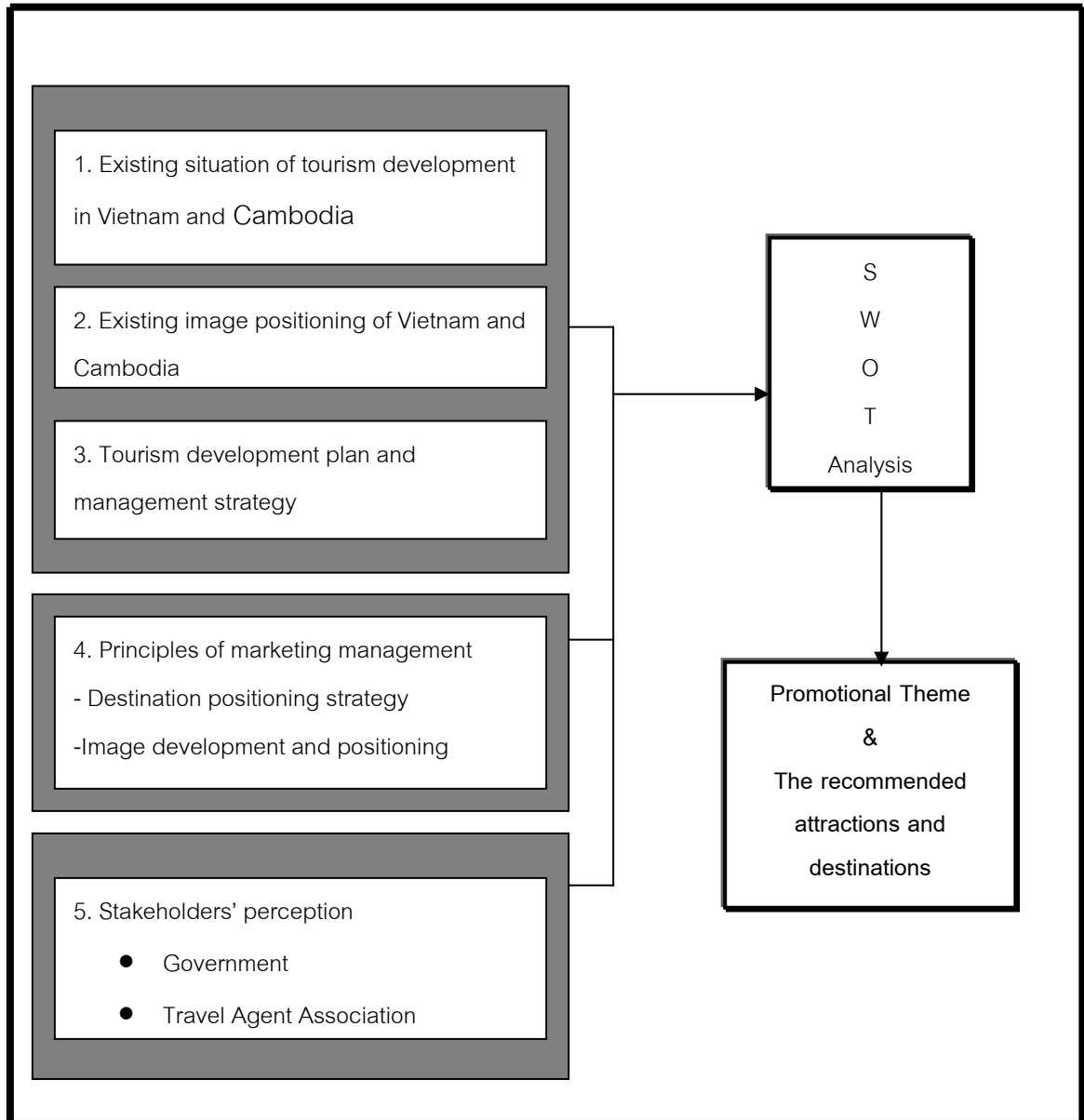


Figure 1.2: The Research Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SECTION 1: THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This research project principally studied the image positioning of countries in the ASEAN, namely Vietnam and Cambodia. Particular emphasis is placed upon the proper image positioning of tourism and precise promotional theme of tourism products for Vietnam and Cambodia. Therefore, it is important to review the current pattern of development of tourism sector in terms of their tourism resources, facilities and services, the key areas of marketing priority zones and product development as well as the main theoretical concepts and relevant research concerning tourism development and aspect of tourism marketing which strengthen this study and provide direction for this research. They are as follows:

1. Concept of destination positioning strategy
2. Concept of image development and positioning

2.1.1. Concept of destination positioning strategy

Tourism is a supply industry of pleasure periphery. In relation to the conception of travel, tourism products comprise a bundle of elements selected to satisfy tourists' needs including transportation, accommodation, attractions and other facilities. Conveniently, tourists do not buy products but they do buy the expectation of benefits at destinations. The tourism destinations provide a convenient focus for the examination of the tourist movement and its impact and significance. They are places with some forms of actual or perceived boundary, political boundary and market-created boundary. The desire to become a recognized destination presents a difficult marketing challenge

(Kotler, Brown & Makens, 2003). The relations between destinations and visitors from their country of origin will be primarily influenced through the process of tourism development and destination marketing. Destination marketing is an essential part of developing and retaining a particular location's popularity. As such, a destination should develop products, tangible and intangible aspects to meet the market demands (Weaver & Lawton, 2002).

Destination could be seen as an assortment of products, including attractions, accommodations, services, tour packages and activities for tourists, which are the key element in the market offering. The destination as a product brings together all aspects of tourism such as demand, transportation, supply and marketing. Then, the destination can be defined as the focus of facilities and services designed to meet the need of the tourist (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998). Some fundamentals within the destination largely conclude travelers' choice and influence their buying motivation. They are destination attractions and environment, destination facilities, accessibility of the destination, images of the destination and price to the travelers (Middleton, 1994). Heath & Wall (1992) stated that most destinations offer an assortment of extensive tourism products, comprising product lines and product items that are made available to tourists in the destination. The governments and private sectors need to think about the core products or primary products that identify what the tourist is really buying in a destination, accessibility and the supporting products offered to add value to the core products and help to differentiate it from the competition. A destination may possibly seek to add a star product or product leader to its product lines and highlight it in promotional literature.

Gartner (1996) affirmed that the basic hypothesis determining whether a tourist chooses one destination over another is utility maximization. Utility or value maximization is the economic basis for allocating funds between travel and all other goods. The travel decision model can be conceptualized as proceeding from beliefs to a product evaluation stage. Products are evaluated in terms of how each one provides for the

reinforcement of favorable or unfavorable beliefs. Product selection is one factor that maximizes a tourist's utility. When designing and developing a destination's product, any destination should consider how accessible the product is (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2003). In addition, design of new tourism products implies a description of tourism product and the development of an appropriate marketing strategy that should fit in the general image of the destination (Heath & Wall, 1992). Themes should be established to position the destination within sustainable development principles (Jamieson, 2001). Middleton (1994) explained that the modern approach to destination positioning is based on the well-tested premises that products, companies and tourist destinations have images or perceptions with which they are identified in the minds of existing and potential customers. Appropriate positions are segment-related.

Once a destination has chosen its target market segments, it must decide what positions to occupy in those segments. A destination's position is the way the destination is defined by tourists on important attributes of the place the destination occupies in the tourists' minds relative to competing destinations. To simplify buying decision making, tourists organize destinations into categories and position products and destinations in their minds. The planners plan positions that will give their destinations the greatest advantage in selected target markets and then design marketing mixed to create the planned position. Destinations can be positioned on the needs they fill or the benefits they offer and against the existing competitors or another product classes (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2003). The positioning statement takes into account many diverse elements which considers what image the destination now conveys and determines whether this is what management desires the image to be (Burke & Resnick, 2000). Positioning is described from the market situation ranging from developing, growth, mature to ageing as well as the competitive position in five categories ranging from weak, acceptable, favorable, strong to dominant (Johnson & Scholes, 1997). Consequently, destination or product positioning is the marketing art of identifying distinctive destination characteristics for a particular consumer group and

developing promotional messages for that group (Gartner, 1996). Burke & Resnick (2000) supported that it is important the product's benefits are clearly communicated to the target market so that they have a positive perception about its value. The positioning statement should indicate how a travel product in destination is different from others that are available which acknowledges as the unique selling proposition (USP).

The process of positioning is therefore the method of changing what people think about the destination, placing images in the minds of the target market and ensuring the tourism product fits the demand. It is a perceptual set of impressions and feelings of the tourism product offering, the price structure, the promotional mix and the advertising in the tourist's minds (Heath & Wall, 1992). There are many ways to position a travel product or destination including positioning relative to a target market, positioning by product benefits, price and quality, positioning relative to a product class and relative to a competitor (Burke & Resnick, 2000). The destination's position within the life cycle can be determined in relation to eight external factors such as market growth rate, growth potential, extensiveness of product lines and number of competitors and increase of market share between the competitors, customer loyalty, entry barriers and technology (Johnson & Scholes, 1997). The tourism industries in countries often make an effort to complement the natural tourism resources of an area with other facilities and artificial attractions in order to develop an effective positioning strategy. Kotler et al (2003) supported that the marketers can follow several positioning strategies. They can position their destinations based on specific destination attributes, against an existing competitors as well as against another product class. It is vital to avoid three major positioning errors: underpositioning or failing ever to position the destination at all, overpositioning or giving tourists a too narrow picture of the destination and confused positioning by leaving tourists with a confused image of destination. Correspondingly, the positioning task consists of three steps, namely identifying a set of possible competitive advantages upon which to build a position, choosing the right competitive advantages and selecting an overall positioning strategy. Destination positioning would

help differentiate the destination's marketing offer with more value along the lines of product, services, channels, people and image (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). Heath & Wall (1992) explained that positioning strategy contributes prominently to the designing of a marketing program, the selection of a product strategy, the determination of the practicable distribution channels, a pricing strategy and the selection of a promotional strategy and theme. It therefore consists of an integrated mix of product, price, distribution and promotion.

The destination positioning strategy is a creative marketing tool to underpin the perceived position with a personality of an identifiable product, service, person, attractions and unique added values against competitors. The key issue in developing and implementing a positioning strategy for any destination concerns how tourists in the target market perceive the destination's marketing program. Therefore, destinations will position their promotional themes and brands on the key benefits and added values that they could offer better than competitors. The full positioning or promotional theme's value that will help create an overall image of a destination is hence established. To be successful, the destination position is considered by how well marketing objectives are accomplished and the destination must facilitate and deliver the message of placed position and specific image to the markets.

2.1.2. Concept of image development and positioning

Tourism industry, as an industry based on imagery (Buck, 1993 as cited in Laws, 1995), spends the high amount of money in the attempt to build an illustration for the country's destinations (Ross, 1998). Image of destinations then plays a critical function in the travel decision process when tourism products at destinations comprise basically the characteristics of intangibility before purchasing, inseparability, variability and perishability. The specific messages and images are employed to stimulate such consumption and to attract visitors to destinations (Laws, 1995).

In general, the main mechanism marketers and planners use to establish a position for a product or destination is the creation of an image for it (Burke & Resnick, 2000). The image is meant to determine and influence how a product is perceived. Consequently, planners, developers and marketers devote a great deal of time and energy to developing and refining successful images of their products. Images of destination may have to do with an area's tourist image projection than the more tangible recreation resources. Destination image could be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, impression and feelings components that people hold of objects, products, services, attractions, events and people of a destination (Crompton, 1979 as cited in Gartner, 1996). Destination images are often a mixture of pull factors such as accessibility, attractions, cultural links, affordability, peace and stability (Weaver & Lawton, 2002). Images of holiday destination seem to change over time and as the result of experience.

Destination image consist of three different components. They are the product such as quality of attraction or cost, the hosts' behaviour and attitude and the environment including weather, scenery and facilities (Milman & Pizam, 1995). The distance from a country of origin might be an important factor in image formation. In addition, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) indicated that image was anticipated to evolve through three stages that could be linked to the three functions of promotion –to inform,

to persuade and to remind. These three stages of image formation include organic image, induced image and complex image (Howie, 2003) such as the following:

- **Organic image** is an awareness of the destination and is prepared before destination promotions are introduced". It is created through informal consideration of a place or conversations with friends.
- **Induced images** are formed when promotions are viewed and evaluated against organic images. Such images are results of advertising in brochures designed to promote one destination.
- **Complex image** results from actual visitation and experience with the destination.

The effect of image management techniques depends on an understanding of potential visitor's interests and attitudes towards the destination. Images can establish a meaningful position in the public's mind as being a place, which is different from other destinations offering similar primary attractions (Laws, 1991). The image, which a person has of any product or destination, is highly subjective. Image is therefore comprised of the ideas or conceptions held individually on the destination. Destination can claim a position in people's minds for their services by emphasizing selected attributes, such as the benefits, which a particular destination offers to tourists or by drawing contrasts with competitors. Such image must be supported by everything that the destination says and does. Brand image should express a distinctive message that communicates the product's major benefits and positioning (Kotler et al, 2003).

Some principles of destination image characteristics need to take into consideration in order to develop images (Gartner, 1996). Principally, the tourism images change slowly. A tourism image is made up of different parts, including the natural resource in which activities take place, the socio-cultural system that governs the provision and type of tourist services and the man-made structures that serves the needs of tourists. Hence, the selection of the right image formation to build a desired touristic image depends on many factors. The first is the amount of money budgeted for image development. Focusing on quality service, unique attraction packages, and

lower-cost image formation agents may be the wisest choice for cash poor rural communities. A second concern is the characteristics of the target market. Timing also has to be considered. Finally, the type of image (s) to be projected must be addressed. As a result of the time it takes to change an image, any induced image formation programs must be long-term. The designed long-term delivery of a message that has at its core a common image should not always use the same vehicle to deliver the message. To be effective, changing an image depends on knowing what images potential travellers now hold and initiating efforts to reinforce existing images or move images in a new direction. Understanding images held by target markets is essential to avoid moving the image into a position held by a strong competitor.

Burke & Resnick (2000) stated that stakeholders in the destination are involved in developing a product's or destination's image and establishing its position in the marketplace. A systematic approach in establishing a product position is the best way to develop an effective image for a product. In the process of considering the image, valuable new marketing ideas emerge. This process provides an opportunity to look at the travel products intensely and objectively. It is important to analyze what is unique about your travel product and destination. An image that conveys uniqueness helps identify and differentiate the destination products in the consumers' minds. The three steps in establishing an effective position are analyzing destination by identifying the major features and benefits, identifying the current position and image and comparing the current position with the marketing objectives. It is necessary to answer the two questions of what is the appeal of the destination and what characteristics of product or destination are being marketed as part of the current position in order to clarify the current position. If the expectations have been met and the tourists feel satisfied, it usually means that the destination has delivered on its promises and the reality of the products match the marketing image. On the other hand, if the perceptions have not been met, the destination will encounter two problems of dissatisfying visitors and a destination image that does not match reality. Depending on what the destination has

found, the destination may need to adjust its position and image. Alternatively, the destination may need to change the product to meet the needs and expectations of visitors or to attract a different market whose expectation can be met or else it is necessary for repositioning and new image development.

Obviously, people will mainly make decision to buy tourism products or visit destination based on their emotional reasons. Awareness on the illustration of any destination heavily influences buying decisions. The image that a destination creates in a prospective visitor's mind is often important than the product reality. To achieve the image development positioning that a destination creates is to design the accurate and distinct message to maximize the appeal of destination's image and maintain a positive relationship with the region and its offering.

SECTION 2: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

2.2.1. Vietnam - the Country Context

2.2.1.1. Geography and natural resources

Vietnam, with territory of "S" shape from the north to the south (see Figure 2.1), is situated to the east of Southeast Asia or the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The country covers an area of 329,566 km². Vietnam shares common borders with other member countries of ASEAN, 950 km with Cambodia and 1,650 km. with Laos in the west and 1,150 km with China in the north. The country stretches between 23° 22' and 8° 30' latitude north of the equator and 102° 10' to 109° 24' east longitude. Its long narrow territory stretches 1700 km from north to south and in the center 50 km from east to west. Vietnam's landscape has great potential as a basic resource for the development of tourism products. It is typified from forests and mountain areas (three-quarters of the land surface) to rivers, delta areas and beaches. Quarters of the country are comprised of coastal plains and the vast delta of the Red River in the North and of the Mekong River

in the South. The long coastline of 3,260 km is stretching from the Tonkin Gulf to the Gulf of Thailand. Vietnam has about 125 beaches and 2,733 islands and coral areas. The biggest island is located in the south-west of the country. Vietnam has a diverse forest, sea-island, river lake ecosystems, caves and grottos.

Vietnam is divided by its residents as having three distinct geographical areas, namely Bac Bo (the North), Trang Bo (the Central region) and Nam Bo (the South), which correspond to the French administrative divisions of Tonkin (Nam Ky), Annam (Trung Ky) and Cochinchina (Backy) (Robinson& Cummings, 1991).

Vietnam has over 800 wood species. Many of them are precious due to their hardness, solidity, beautiful grains and colors. The famous wood species comprise ironwood, oak, teak, thitka on limestone-mountains and wood with beautiful grains such as mahogany and calamander. The virgin forests have a reserve of wood of over 300 cubic meters per hectare. The fauna is as abundant and diversified as the flora. In Vietnam, there exist a variety of ancient tropical fauna and about 200 species of animals, 800 species of birds, 100 species of amphibians and over 150 species of reptiles. 1,000 species live in the seas and rivers and 200 species live in fresh water. Though the Vietnamese fauna is rich, varied and comprises rare species of high value, not all of them are available in large quantities ([www. vietnamembassy-usa.org](http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org)).

2.2.1.2. Climate

Vietnam has a remarkably diverse climate. Vietnam's climate is characterized by the influence of the North and South monsoon which gives rise to a humid climate. In the north of Vietnam, the climate is influenced by the dry winter monsoon-winds of Central Asia that pronounces winter and summer seasons. In Central Vietnam, the climate varies from north to south. The part of Central Vietnam closed to the north of the country is almost indistinguishable to that of the Red River Delta and another part closed to the south has climatically more in common with the Mekong Delta area. The climate of

Central Vietnam is often subject to natural calamities such as typhoons. In the southwestern part of Central Vietnam, there are large high plateaus of Truongson Mountains (Annamite Cordillera), 1,000 meters above sea level, with fertile basalt layers, appropriate for the cultivation of tropical and temperate cash crops, such as rubber, tea, coffee, and cacao. The southern part of Vietnam is characterized by two main seasons, including a rainy season from May to October and dry season from November to April. The tourist season is from October to December and May to June in the north, from May to August and January to April in the central Vietnam and May to December in the south.

2.2.1.3. People, culture and religions

Vietnam culture is closely attached to the history of the formation and development of the nation. There were three layers of culture overlapping each other during the history of Vietnam including local culture, the culture that mixed with those of China and other countries in the region, and the culture that interacted with Western culture. The most prominent feature of the Vietnamese culture is that it possesses the strong local cultural foundations. For that reason, it was not incorporated by foreign cultures. On the contrary, it was able to utilize and localize those from abroad to enrich the national culture.

Vietnam's population is about 82 million with 54 ethnic groups living across the country. The biggest group is Kinh (Viet), which accounts for over 80% of the total population living in the lowland areas whereas the minority groups primarily occupy the highlands and mountains (Pham Trung Luong, 2006). Each ethnicity has its own cultural characteristics, thus, the Vietnamese culture is a diversified unification.



Source: <http://www.discodesigns.com/asa1/vietnam/Vietnam.jpg>

Figure 2.1: Map of Vietnam

The Vietnamese nation was formed early in the history and often had to carry out wars of resistance against foreign invaders which created an important cultural feature. The Vietnamese national culture emerged from a concrete living environment. The natural conditions such as temperature, humidity, monsoon, water-flows and water-rice agriculture make known a remarkable impact on the material and spiritual life of the nation, the characteristics and psychology of the Vietnamese. Most architecture has been made of wood and other material that proved highly vulnerable in the tropical climate.

Vietnam is a country with a rich variety of religions based on popular beliefs, religions brought to Vietnam from the outside, and several indigenous religious groups. Similarly to other countries, the Vietnamese have several popular beliefs, such as animism and theism. Four great philosophies and religions have shaped the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people, namely Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Christianity (Robinson & Cummings, 1991). Confucianism has been an important force in shaping Vietnam's social system and the everyday lives and beliefs of its people. According to the Taoist cosmology, the forces of nature are regarded as supernatural beings and great historical personages have become gods. In regard with this aspect, Taoism has become assimilated into the daily lives of most Vietnamese as a collection of superstitions and mystical and animistic beliefs. Much of the sorcery and magic that are now part of popular Vietnamese religion have their origin in Taoism. The most widespread popular belief among the Vietnamese is the belief in ancestor-worship. In regard to the major world religions, Vietnam is a multi-religious state with more than 20 million believers and more than 30,000 places of worship. Buddhism is the largest of the major world religions in Vietnam. It was the earliest foreign religion to be introduced in Vietnam, arriving from India in the second century A.D. in two ways, the Mahayana sect via China, and the Hinayana sect via Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. During the ten-century feudal reign of Vietnam, Buddhism was considered a state religion. At present, Vietnam has more than 20,000 pagodas dedicated to Buddha with a large number of

other pagodas being built or restored. The second largest foreign religion in Vietnam is Catholicism. Islam (religion for mostly ethnic Khmer and Chams) was introduced to Vietnam in the 10th century but did not flourish. In addition to these religions, Vietnam has indigenous religions, such as the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects, with their holy lands in the city of Tay Ninh and the provinces of Chau Doc and An Giang in the Mekong Delta. The Vietnamese religions have never opposed or competed with one another but were united in a national united front, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, peacefully coexisting in the Vietnamese community and contributing to the struggle against foreign aggression for national construction (www.vietnamembassy-usa.org).

2.2.2. Cambodia - the Country Context

2.2.2.1. Geography and natural resources

Cambodia, a country in the southern part of Greater Mekong Sub-region and southwestern part of Indochina peninsula, covers an area of 181,035 km² (see Figure 2.2). The country's shape is an almost square polygon. The territory of Cambodia extends 440 kilometers from north to south and 560 kilometers from west to east. Cambodia has the common borders with Laos in the northeast, Vietnam in the east and the southeast, Thailand in the west and the northwest. Among the 10 member countries of the ASEAN, Cambodia ranks eighth in land size. The border of Cambodia encompasses 2,600 Kilometers of which five-sixth is land and one-sixth is coastal border. Cambodia has the Gulf of Thailand on its 440 km-long southern seaboard. More than 60% of the country area is forested with the north and southwest of the country consisting of tropical forest and highlands while the central basin is fertile land dissected by the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers. The coastal boundary of Cambodia is rich in beautiful uninhabited islands, virgin beaches, white sand and fresh air and aquatic creatures that are good for aquatic business and tourism (www.mot.gov.kh).

Geographically, the Mekong passes through the entire length of the country. From the northern border, it travels 500 km south until it crosses the Vietnamese border in the south. In relation to tourism development, four types of topography are classified, namely plain area, surrounded Great Lake Tonle Sap Area, coastal area and plateau and mountainous area. The topography of Cambodia's coastal area is mountainous, plateau, plain, coast, seaside and gulf. There is much sand in this area. Palm oil, rubber, coconuts, pepper, durian and other crops can be grown in this area. It is also rich in varieties of mangrove. (www.mot.gov.kh).

Cambodia is rich in assortment of flora and fauna. The central lowland consists of rice paddies and fields of dry crops. The transitional plains are mostly covered with savannah grasses. In the southwest, there are virgin rainforests. Vegetation in the coastal areas includes both evergreen and mangrove forests. The eastern highland is covered with grassland and forest. In Cambodia, there are many wild animals including bears, elephants, rhinoceros, leopards, tigers, wild oxen, butterflies birds and wild ducks.

2.2.2.2. Climate

The country has a tropical monsoon warm and humid climate that gives the four distinct major seasons. The most pleasant is the cool-dry season from November to February during which temperatures are cooler (average 20-28° C.). The hot-dry season lasts from March to May (average 30-35° C.). The rainy season is from June to August during which temperatures are relatively cool (average 22-30° C.) and from September to October is the cool-wet season (average 25-30° C.). At this time of year, it rarely rains in the morning: most precipitation comes in the afternoon, and even then, only sporadically. This year-round tropical climate makes Cambodia ideal for developing tourism. The country is not affected directly by tropical storms. In the monsoon season, abundant rain allows for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops. Rainfall varies considerably from area to area. Whereas the seaward slopes of the southwest highlands

(Kompong Som and Kampot provinces) receive more than 5,000 mm of rain per annum, the central lowlands average only about 1,400 mm. The southwestern monsoon brings 70%-80 % of the annual rainfall to the country (www.mot.gov.kh).



Source: www.infoplease.com

Figure 2.2: Map of Cambodia

2.2.2.3. People, culture and religions

Little is known of the early history of Cambodia. Cambodia is a country that ethnically comprises of Khmer about 90% (ethnic Cambodians), making the country the most homogeneous in Southeast Asia and other ethnic backgrounds such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Chams and hill tribes. The Khmer- Leou- or upland- Khmer- are one of the main tribal groups and live in the forested mountain zones, mainly in the Northeast. Traditionally, the Khmer-Leou was semi-nomadic and practiced slash and burn agriculture. In recent years, increasing numbers have turned to settled agriculture and adopted many of the customs of the lowland Khmer. The official language is Khmer or Cambodian enriched by the Indian Pali and Sanskrit languages and influenced by Thai and French. Khmer is related to the languages spoken by hill tribe people of Laos, Vietnam and Malaysia. Around 80% of people or most population live in rural areas and their way of life is principally based on farming, basically practiced on family-operated holdings while the Vietnamese and Chinese dominate the business sector.

The Cambodian culture and religions are strongly influenced by contact with the civilizations of early Indian, Java and Chinese cultures. The official religion is Theravada Buddhism, which is also practiced in neighboring countries of Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Between the 15th century when Angkor fell to the Thais and was abandoned and the advent of the French protectorate in 1863, foreign invasions, civil war, depopulation and general political instability left little opportunity and few resources to keep Cambodia's consciousness of the glory of its past achievements has tended to dominate artistic expression, leading to conservation rather than innovation in the arts (Robinson & Cummings, 1991). For centuries, monks were the only educated people residing in rural communities and hold the important roles of teachers. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge massacred the majority of monks and destroyed most of temples and it was not until after the Vietnamese invasion that Buddhism was openly practiced.

The national art and culture reflects the religious traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism, for example, stone temples created by Angkor's architects and sculptors are decorated with wall carvings and sculptures of Hindu gods and the Buddha. Khmer architecture reached its period of greatest magnificence during the Angkor era (the 9th to 14th centuries). Some of the finest examples of architecture from this period are Angkor Wat and the structures of Angkor Thom. In addition, many of the finest works of Khmer sculpture are on display at the National Museum in Phnom Penh (Robinson & Cummings, 1991). Common motifs in Khmer sculpture are apsaras (celestial nymphs), which have become a symbol of the Khmer culture. The apsaras are carved with splendidly ornate jewelry, clothed in latest Angkor fashion and represented the ultimate ideal of feminine beauty at that time. Other motifs are nagas (sacred aquatic snakes), which play an important part in Hindu mythology and are possibly more than any other motif characteristic of Southeast Asia. Most of these motifs have been taken from Indian art and have been modified into what is now known as traditional Khmer art. The symmetrical towers of Angkor Wat are stylized on the Cambodian flag and have become a symbol of Khmer culture (www.world66.com).

SECTION 3: STUDY OF EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

In relation to the tourism development in the Southeast Asia, Vietnam and Cambodia, as member countries of both cooperative associations, namely the ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Sub-region, showed strong growth in number of tourist arrivals since 1999. The two countries are opening up their economies of free market policies to global integration and encouraging foreign investments. In comparison with other countries in the region, Thailand is essentially a capitalist system. Myanmar has a centrally planned militarized style of government. Cambodia and Vietnam may be situated between these two extremes of market orientation (www.asiapacificprojects.com)

As figured in Table 2.1, Vietnam attracted about 2.1 million international tourists and had approximately 11.2 million domestic tourists in the year 2000 (VNAT, 1999?). Noticeably, the growth rate of head-count arrivals for some ASEAN countries in 2004 was increasing at a decreasing rate compared to 2003. For instance, the international arrivals to Myanmar increased at 5.92%, followed by Thailand at 5.75%. Laos's arrival grew by 7.73%, followed by Cambodia by 8.20% and Vietnam by 13.79%. Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam are in big demand at the global trade shows. The overall average annual percentage growth rate (AAGR%) for arrival numbers is estimated to be uppermost for small destinations from 2000 - 2004 such as Cambodia (6.6%). Of the major markets, the highest growth is projected for Thailand at 5.6% while the strong growth is projected for Laos at 4.6%, followed by Myanmar at 4.0% as shown in the following Table 2.2.

Table 2.1: Total Arrivals to Southeast Asia

Country	1999	2000	2002	2003	2004
Cambodia ¹	367,743	466,365	522,978	701,014	952,546
Indonesia	4,727,520	5,067,217	4,938,172	4,499,831	4,583,836
Laos	614,278	737,208	735,662	636,351	789,547
Malaysia	7,931,149	10,221,582	10,913,127	10,905,367	11,287,124
Myanmar	198,211	207,665	217,212	205,610	245,501
Singapore	6,958,173	7,685,638	7,872,859	7,656,330	8,121,439
Thailand	8,651,260	9,578,826	10,872,976	10,082,109	11,980,370
Vietnam	1,781,754	2,140,100	2,627,988	2,428,735	2,927,339
TOTAL	31,230,088	36,104,601	38,700,974	37,115,347	40,887,702

(Sources: Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2000; WTO, 2000; Turner & Witt, 2002 a, b, 2003)

¹ The flows to Cambodia may be more than what is presented in official statistics, as cross border travel by passport holders are an undercount in comparison with border data available with Thai authorities, The Agency for Coordinating Mekong Tourism activities (AMTA), GMS Statistics, 2002; GMS Country Reports, PATA Annual Statistical Report 2003.

Table 2.2: The Average Annual Growth Rate of Countries in Southeast Asia

Country	2003	2004	2005	00-04 AAGR (%)	03-04 AAGR (%)	04-05 AAGR (%)
Cambodia	701,014	952,546	1,089,771	6.57	8.20	14.41
Indonesia	4,499,831	5,120,724	5,269,604	0.93	1.87	2.91
Laos	636,351	789,547	886,034	4.57	7.73	12.22
Malaysia	10,905,367	13,852,273	14,610,651	3.46	3.50	5.47
Myanmar	205,610	245,501	273,448	4.01	5.92	11.38
Singapore	7,656,330	7,729,484	8,198,750	2.84	6.07	6.07
Thailand	10,082,109	11,980,370	13,065,876	5.57	4.85	9.06
Vietnam	2,428,735	2,927,339	3,130,574	6.25	13.79	6.94
TOTAL	37,115,347	42,597,784	46,524,708	3.79	5.10	6.51

(Source: Turner & Witt, 2002 a, b, 2003)

While international tourism plays an important role in the region's economy, Intra-Mekong travel does not appear to be very significant, except for Thais visiting Laos, and, to a lesser extent- Cambodians visiting Vietnam. The potential for Intra-Mekong travel is very limited in the case of the poorer Mekong countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (PATA, 2002).

Although tourism to most Mekong sub-region countries is still quite small in scale, it is developing rapidly, with a 6.7% annual growth in 2001 to a regional total of 14,669,428 arrivals (Tirasatayapitak & Laws, 2003) and 8.6% of change (AMTA, 2003) with total tourist arrivals of 16,235,274 in 2002. Nevertheless, rapid tourism development in countries that are claimed as new destinations, such as Cambodia and Vietnam, indicates that the growth is likely to continue for the Southeast Sub-region (WTO, 1997). The overall growth rate of tourist arrivals in the Greater Mekong Sub-region is sizeable (see Table 2.3). For example, earlier Cambodia had recorded the

most impressive increase of 41.1 percent (McInerney, 2000) while other member countries have not been too particularly aggressive in seeking foreign expertise and investments for tourism.

Table 2.3: The Growth Rate of Tourist Arrivals to the GMS 1995-2005

Destination	1995-2002	2003-2004	2004-2005
Cambodia	19.99%	8.2%	9.5%
Laos	11.36%	7.7%	8.1%
Myanmar	6.48%	5.9%	6.8%
Thailand	6.60%	4.9%	5.9%
Vietnam	9.97%	13.8%	17.4%
China	11.22%	10.1%	8.8%

Source: Turner & Witt, 2002b
 GMS Country Reports
 PATA Annual Statistical Report 2003
 WTO Market Trends, 2002.

Following on from the above point, tourism has evidently helped to spread economic activity into member countries of the region as exemplified in the following context.

2.3.1. Trends in Tourism Volume of Vietnam

With an economic renovation toward the open door policy since the mid-1980s, Vietnam with the natural resources has excellent opportunities for achieving the development of its tourism industry. Though this country introduces the constructive will to welcome the foreign direct investment and the foreign currency exchange, the state

still plays a leading role to establish and monitor the strategic activities in development of all industry sectors. During the past years, the country has rapidly shifted from the post-war economic downturn to the lubricant portrait of tourism growth. The tourism industry of Vietnam is hence becoming a leading economic sector.

Along with the renovation of the country, Vietnam tourism has been progressively developed. The number of international visitors to Vietnam had increased from 250,000 in 1990 to 2,140,000 in 2000. Since the year 2001, Vietnam's tourism has continuously proved to be an important segment of the economy. During 2001-2005, the international tourism arrival number to Vietnam has been increasing with average growth rate of 10.9%. Major tourism development statistics are shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Tourism Statistic Figures during 2001-2005

Figures	Unit	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average Growth rate (% p.a)
Int. arrival	'000	2,330.0	2,628.0	2,428.7	2,928.0	3,460.0	9.1
Dom. arrival	'000	11,700	13,000	13,500	14,500	16,100	8.1
Tourism income	USD Bill	1.63	1.97	1.90	2.17	2.52	11.9
Hotel rooms	'000	74.5	78.8	82.0	85.4	112.0	11.2

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2006

There is a decline in the growth rate in 2002 with a gradual increase through 2003-2005 as seen in Table 2.5. The year 2004 was blessed as a successful year for Vietnam tourism (www.business-in-asia.com). The number of international tourists increased 20.5% against the previous year 2003. The total figure of international tourists

to Vietnam in 2004 was 2,927,339. Although in the first months of 2004 and 2005, the bird-flu contagion had region-wide harmful impacts on the tourism industry, the number of international arrivals to Vietnam has continuously increased and reached 3,230,000 and the tourism generated the revenue of USD 2.52 billion by the end of the year 2005 (10.3% over the year 2004) (Pham Trung Luong, 2006). In the first Quarter of 2005, international tourists increased by 22 per cent against the same period in 2004, with a total of more than 870,000. Other indicators such as national income from tourism, spending by tourists and the duration of stay of tourists were higher than past years. Although tourism went through the difficult period of the bird flu incident in the first months of the year, the tourism could be recovered in the later months with a quick comeback of the number of tourists. This significance has shown a fairly stable growth of tourism for Vietnam (www.business-in-asia.com).

However, the number of international arrivals to Vietnam is still low compared to some ASEAN countries. In 2005, the total arrivals to Vietnam are equivalent to 27.2% of Thailand, 20.9% of Malaysia and 37.6% of Singapore. During the first 4 months of 2006, the number of international arrivals was 1,287,000, increasing 15.9% over the same period in 2005 (Pham Trung Luong, 2006). Appreciably, tourism growth rate in 2005 observed a good success and thrust for Vietnam tourism for the coming period of 2006-2010. By 2010, Vietnam aims to target 6 million international arrivals staying 8 days in its boundary and 25 million domestic tourists that would generate \$ 4.5 billion, 6.5% GDP and 1.4 million additional jobs (www.asiapacificprojects.com).

Table 2.5: Vietnam – Growth Rate 1990-2005

Year	Arrivals	AAGR (%)
1990	250,000	33.31
1991	300,000	20.00
1992	550,000	83.33
1993	600,438	9.17
1994	1,018,244	69.58
1995	1,351,296	32.71
1996	1,607,155	18.93
1997	1,715,637	6.75
1998	1,520,128	-11.44
1999	1,781,754	17.21
2000	2,140,100	20.11
2002	2,627,988	5.45
2003	2,428,735	6.35
2004	2,927,339	7.74
2005	3,460,000	9.10

Note: AAGR is Average Annual Growth Rate. Tourist arrivals are measured by nationality not residence.

Source: Turner & Witt , 2002a, 2003,
PATA Annual Statistical Report 2003
WTO Market Trends, 2002

Regarding to the tourist markets, the tourist arrivals in 2004 were 27% from China, 26% from North Asian countries, 11% from ASEAN countries, 12% from Europe and 11% from North America. China comprises the largest market share and is projected to increase its market share significantly. Most Chinese tourists arrived in Vietnam through land border crossings. Chinese Taipei is also projected to increase its market share, but the USA, Japan and France will have a reduced share while the UK will remain stable (Turner & Witt, 2002). During 2001-2005, there is a difference between growth rates of each market. Among Asian countries, Japan and Korea have recorded the biggest growth while leaders of European countries are Holland and Germany. Canada marks the biggest increase for the countries from America continent (see Table 2.6). Obviously, Vietnam tourism has maintained key markets in northeast Asia, West Europe, and ASEAN-Pacific as well as new markets in North America, Nordic Countries, Russia, South Asia and South Africa. Vietnam tourism continues to promote potential markets and develop suitable products to new markets. In the future, the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism will make greater efforts to increase both the number of tourists and business efficiency (www.vibforum.vcci.com.vn).

Table 2.6: Main Market Arrivals to Vietnam

	Market	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average Growth rate (% p.a)
ASIA							
1	China	672.9	724.4	693.4	778.4	780.2	4.0
2	Japan	204.9	279.8	209.7	267.2	312.3	13.9
3	South Korea	75.2	105.1	130.1	233.0	298.7	42.7
4	Taiwan	200.1	211.1	207.9	257.0	290.1	10.1
5	ASEAN countries	240.9	269.4	327.0	390.0	498.2	20.1
EUROPE							
6	France	99.7	111.5	86.8	104.0	120.3	6.3
7	Germany	39.1	46.3	44.6	56.6	75.8	18.8
8	England	64.7	69.7	63.6	71.0	87.2	8.4
9	Holland	15.6	18.1	16.1	17.7	21.4	8.9
NORTH AMERICA							
10	USA	230.5	260.0	219.0	272.5	328.7	10.5
11	Canada	36.0	43.6	40.1	53.8	64.2	18.4
OCEAN							
12	Australia	84.1	96.6	93.3	128.7	139.8	14.4
13	New Zealand	6.9	8.3	8.1	10.5	12.1	15.6
14	Others	359.4	384.1	279.3	287.6	431.0	8.1
TOTAL		2,330.0	2,628.0	2,428.7	2,928.0	3,460.0	10.9

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2006

As indicated in Table 2.7, the purpose of the trip for international visitors registered the highest figure for holidays, followed by visiting friends and relatives and business. The growth rate of tourists in leisure segment is remarkable comparing to other segments with the increase of 15.0% per annum. The pattern of trip purposes during 2001-2005 has not greatly changed. The number of tourists who visit Vietnam for VFR purpose remains constant while the growth of the business trips was decreasing in the year 2005.

Table 2.7: Purposes of Visit to Vietnam

Purposes of Visit	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average Growth rate (% p.a)
Leisure	1,225.2	1,460.5	1,238.6	1,584.0	2,031.0	15.0
Business	395.2	445.7	468.4	521.7	501.7	6.4
VFR	390.2	430.9	392.3	467.4	539.7	9.0
Others	319.4	290.9	329.4	354.9	387.6	5.3
TOTAL	2,330.0	2,628.0	2,428.7	2,928.0	3,460.0	10.9

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2006

Since Vietnam has encountered the problems of poor seaports and road system, tourist arrivals to Vietnam is then mainly by air. In addition, the different driving side in Vietnam is an important constraint to the ASEAN market. From 2001-2005, the travel by air is constantly high with the growing rates of 15.9% per annum (see Table 2.8) (Pham Trung Luong, 2006).

Table 2.8: Means of Transportation to Vietnam

Transportation	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average Growth rate (% p.a)
By air	1,294.5	1,540.1	1,394.9	1,821.6	2,249.0	15.9
By sea	284.6	309.1	241.2	263.0	207.6	-6.3
By road	750.9	778.8	792.6	843.4	1,003.4	7.7
TOTAL	2,330.0	2,628.0	2,428.7	2,928.0	3,460.0	10.9

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2006

The future of Vietnam tourism is lucrative with the ever-increasing demand. In the year 2006, the country is expected to host many important tourism events such as the Central Heritage Road, Hung King Worshipping Festival and APEC Summit. These events along with interesting festivals and fairs will bring more inbound tourists to the country. Hence, Vietnam expects to welcome 3.6-3.8 million international tourists and 16.7 million domestic tourists with total revenue of VND 36 trillion (USD 2.28 billion) ((www.vibforum.vcci.com.vn)).

2.3.2. Trends in Tourism Volume of Cambodia

Cambodia, internationally known as the Khmer Empire, is rich in its heritage, natural beauty and vast pristine seashores. Cambodia has considerable potential for tourism development and this was seen briefly in the period 1994 to 1996 prior to the commencement of more political confusion (Turner & Witt, 2002a). Visitor numbers augmented extensively in 1996 but declined in the following years because of the distressing effects of the national political instability and Asian financial crises of 1997 and delayed recovery until 1999. Over the last ten years, the number of international

tourism arrivals to Cambodia has averagely increased by 25 % - 30% annually (MOT, 2002).

In relation to the enhancement in Cambodia's image during the last three years of SEDP-I (the first Socio-economic Development Plan), visitation rose as a result of increased direct flights to Phnom Penh and Siem Reap from neighboring Asian countries and the re-opening of the prime archeological site at Preah Vihear in northern Cambodia. The September 11 crisis affected the annual growth of tourist arrivals as in other ASEAN countries. International tourist arrivals to Cambodia in 2000 reached 466,365 increasing at decreasing rate of 26.82% over the previous year 1999. Remarkably, the quick jump of head counts puts the country on path to reach the 1,055,202 arrivals recorded for 2004 with an increase of 50.53% compared to 2003 when tourism bounced back after a depressing SARS outbreak kept visitors away in 2003 as described in Table 2.9.

In the first half of 2005 compared to the same period of 2004, tourist arrivals in Cambodia jumped 38.4 percent to 682,431 with the percentage of change 34.72 percent between the period of 2004 and 2005. The international tourist arrivals to Cambodia by air in 2004 reached 626,121. This introduced an increase of 17.46% and 66.06% of arrivals at the International Phnom Penh Airport and Siem Reap Airport compared to the figures of 2003. From January – May 2005, the international arrivals to Cambodia by air have reached 349,960. This showed an increase of 30.92% and 59.62% of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap Airport compared to the same period of 2004 (see table 2.10). The most important tourist destination is still reserving for Siem Reap, which welcomed 676,809 tourists for 2005 (www.embassyofcambodia.org.nz).

Table 2.9: Cambodia – Growth Rate 1993-2005

Year	Arrivals	AAGR (%)
1993	118,183	na
1994	176,617	49.44
1995	219,680	24.38
1996	260,489	18.58
1997	218,843	-15.99
1998	286,524	30.93
1999	367,743	28.35
2000	466,365	26.82
2001	604,919	29.71
2002	786,524	30.02
2003	701,014	-10.87
2004	1,055,202	50.53
2005	1,421,615	14.41

Note: Total arrivals data prior to 1993 is not available. AAGR is Average Annual Growth Rate. Na = not available.

Source: The Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Country Report of Cambodia 2003
 PATA Annual Statistical Report 2003
 WTO Market Trends, 2002
 Turner & Witt, 2003
<http://www.mot.gov.kh>, 2006

Table 2.10: Total Visitor Arrivals to Cambodia from January – May 2004-2005

	2004 % Share	2005 % Share	% Change
Air			
-Phnom Penh	127,186 – 30.04%	166,507 – 27.97%	30.92 %
-Siem Reap Direct Flight	114,930 – 27.15%	183,453 – 30.82%	59.62%
Land & Boat	144,656 – 34.17%	202,502 – 33.69%	38.61%
Preah Vihear	36,580 – 8.64%	44,741 – 7.52%	22.31%
TOTAL	423,352 – 100.00%	595,203 – 100.00%	40.59%

Source: The Ministry of Tourism

Airlines serving the destination of Cambodia include China Southern Airlines, Laos Aviation, Dragon Air, Thai International Airway, Malaysia Airlines, Siem Reap Airway, Silk Air, Vietnam Airlines, Bangkok Airways, Shanghai Airline, Eva Air, Yunnan Airline, and Mandarin Airlines. Recently, more than half of visitors traveled independently and non-group tour while 32.64% use the service of group tour while visiting Cambodia.

Cambodia has introduced its steadily improving performance as a tourist destination during the period of ten years from 1996 to the point where the country now has more than 1 million international visitors a year. These visitors generate in excess of USD 777 million annually for the local economy, excluding leakage that contributed to approximately 12% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The progress of domestic tourism has been single out for its leading role of internal economic movement and manifestly contributing to poverty alleviation. In 2004, there were more than two million domestic visitors with an augmentation of USD 100 millions to the national revenue (MOT, 2006).

Regarding the tourism market for Cambodia, the United States was the single largest source of visitors, accounting for 13.5 percent of arrivals by air in 2000 (exclusive of direct flights to Siem Reap). China and France accounted for about 12 and 9 percent of visitors respectively and were followed closely by Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and the United Kingdom (Turnet & Witt, 2002a). Market share is forecast to remain higher for the USA with a significant flow of visiting friends and relatives (VFR). In 2004, Cambodia can be seen to benefit receiving more international visitors from Asia and the Pacific reported the largest portion totaling of 596,361, increased 42.83% over the previous year of 2003 while the visitors from Europe, America and Middle East amounted 242,812, 122,169, and 93,860 with an increase of 32.43%, 37.79% and 18.45% respectively. Japan was expected to improve its market share to become the third most important market after China by 2004. Cambodia was most popular over the first half of 2005 with South Koreans at 14.9 percent of all visitors, following by Japanese at 8.8 percent, US nationals at 8.1 percent, the United Kingdom at 5.1 percent, and Australia at 3.35 percent. Arrivals via direct flights to Siem Reap made up 29.0 percent of the total, up slightly on the year 2004 at 26.3 percent. In terms of purpose of visit in 2004, visitor arrivals on holiday shared the biggest number, accounting for 189,110 or 60.32% of total arrivals while business tourist account for 42,483 shared 13.55% and the rest were the official, friends, relative visits and others (MOT, 2006).

Tourist arrivals on holiday shared the biggest number accounting for 189,110 or 60.32% of total arrivals while business tourists' account for 42,483 shared 13.55%. The purposes of visits for the rest of visitors were the officials and visiting friends and relatives. 28.51% of all tourist arrivals in 2004 were repeaters. The average length of stay is 5.5 days and their expenditure is USD 79 per day per person. Cambodia's government is trying to persuade tourists to stay longer and visit more sights than the World Heritage temple complex of Angkor Wat. Tourism is one of the only sources of foreign exchange for Cambodia. The government is aiming to receive two million tourists to Cambodia by 2008. Following this growth trends, there will be more than three million

tourists visiting this country, including two million who will particularly visit Siem Reap Angkor by 2010 (www.embassyofcambodia.org.nz).

It is critical to note that if some obstacles in traveling to the GMS countries such as poor transportation systems and difficulty of border processing procedures will be overcome, it is likely that international tourism arrivals could increase by 11 percent per annum to 30.6 million arrivals by 2010 and by around 8.5 percent per annum to 46.1 million by 2015. Obviously, the forecast growth of international tourism will have a profound impact on the economies of all countries and will challenge the tourism management capacities if it is to be sustainable (www.asiapacificproject.com).

Two scenarios of international tourism flows to the GMS countries including Cambodia and Vietnam (2006-2015) were interestingly predicted. The first scenario is basically consistent with international tourism targets set by the GMS NTOs for 2010 and projected out to 2015 as detailed in Table 2.6. This scenario assumes that the tourism development and marketing activities in the sub-region between 2006, 2010 and 2015 are carried out without a more concerted sub-regional cooperative effort to implement strategies and action plans to promote the sub-region as a single destination. The second scenario to 2010 and 2015 assumes that the GMS countries work together under strong sub-regional tourism cooperative programs involving cross-border cooperative facilitation, infrastructure development programs, development and promotion of the sub-region as a single destination with a uniquely branded product such as Mekong Tourism (www.asiapacificproject.com).

Table 2.11: Forecast of international tourist arrivals to the GMS region
(2010 and 2015)

GMS Country	Scenario 1		Scenario 2	
	2010	2015	2010	2015
Cambodia	2,138,944	3,769,550	2,052,479	5,486,554
China				
-Guangxi	874,954	1,541,968	930,853	1,872,278
-Yunnan	874,024	1,540,329	929,864	1,870,288
Laos	387,105	667,119	466,464	979,549
Myanmar	705,443	1,136,123	711,799	1,226,681
Thailand	21,420,714	30,043,660	21,469,398	30,822,097
Vietnam	4,196,733	7,396,077	4,897,307	9,764,580
Total arrivals	30,597,917	46,094,826	31,908,163	52,022,028

SECTION 4: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS

2.4.1. Tourism Development in Vietnam

2.4.1.1. Overview of tourism development policies

Vietnam is quite fast moving in tourism development comparing to other ASEAN member countries. Tourism scenario in Vietnam strongly expresses that Vietnam is following Thailand's fast-track tourism development model with the need to earn foreign exchange. Interestingly, Vietnam is rather independent on its own policy to develop its tourism industry and does not automatically use the development plans established by the foreign bodies.

Vietnam employs the Five-Year Plan for Socio-Economic Development from 2001-2005, the 2001-2010 Socio-Economic Development Strategy together with the framework of the National Tourism Action Program for the period of 2002-2005 as a strategic guidance for the country's development and to help encourage the economic growth. Vietnam's 10 Year Socio-Economic Development Strategy expresses a well-built obligation to rapid growth, job creation, poverty reduction and social equity. The strategy articulates the long-range development vision for the next ten year to basically develop the country from an agriculture-based economy to a modern-oriented industrialized economy by 2020 (www.grips, ac.jp as cited in Tirasatayapitak, 2005). Tourism is embraced as an implement to achieve such vision of the country. The overall strategy on tourism development expects tourism to play an important role in the national economy and in the sustainability of the country's culture, environment and national security. Sustainable development is employed as a primary path for tourism development in Vietnam. The strategy also states that 'historical-cultural tourism' and 'eco-tourism' should be focused on, a positive image of Vietnam must be created and that the nation should become a Southeast Asian regional tourism center.

Vietnam introduces the country image as a friendly and safety destination to bring tourism into play. It is noteworthy that the major consideration in preparing the strategies on tourism development is the need to rapidly bring the country from the condition of underdevelopment and to raise the country's image. To achieve the objectives of the development, the tourism strategies focus mainly on the adoption of a five-point strategy including promoting tourism toward a balanced circulation between international and domestic tourism, adopting a niche and mass-market approach based on variety of tourism products and quality improvement, promoting investment schemes, adopting a tourism zone development approach and building up tourism alliances with neighboring countries.

2.4.1.2. Development orientation for tourism zone

Vietnam will focus on investment in tourism complexes, resorts and ecological and cultural tourism attractions. In the period of 2001-2010, 4 national tourism complexes and 17 tourism theme parks will be shaped with different investment scales in potential tourism areas. Tourism theme parks comprise tourism mountainous recreation resort, eco-tourism resort, tourism cultural-historical resort, tourism beach resort, tourism cave ecological resort and tourism ecological resort of mangrove-forest. Entertainment facilities in tourism centers as Hanoi, Ha Long, Da Nang, Hue, Nha Trang, Lam Dong, Vung Tau, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho will be developed as prioritized projects in order to enhance an attractiveness of tourism activities and increase tourists' length of stay and spending. Additionally, coordination with related bodies in investment, protection and conservation of tourism resources and development of traditional culture activities and craft villages are required. Based on the on-going tourism activities and increasing demand of visitors in the development course, some theme resorts in the surroundings of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Highland area, and Mekong Delta as well as along the corridor of national tourism circuits can be considered for investment.

Tourism development strategy for this state is based on the approach of establishing tourism zones. The major types of attractions are defined for each zone. Each focuses on characteristics of tourist activities and major development orientations linked to tourist growth dynamic and economic key areas that offer substantial market potential for tourism development. The strategy also identifies several special interest themes based on the country's cultural, historic and environmental attributes. Vietnam territories can be strategically divided into three tourism zones or designated as poles or regions (Jansen-Verbeke, Go & Hom, 1995) as described in Table 2.12.

Table 2.12: Strategic tourism zones for major tourism products

Strategic Tourism Zones	Areas	Product
1. Northern Tourism Zone	Ha Qiang - Hanoi - Ha Tinh Hanoi - Haiphong - Ha Long (A tourist growth dynamic triangle)	Cultural tourism Eco-tourism Sightseeing Recreation tourism Commercial business tourism Mountain tourism Seaside tourism
2. North - Central Tourism Zone (The historical site of Hue-Danang)	1. <u>Co-zone centers</u> Quang Binh – Hue – Da Nang – Quang Ngai 2. <u>Tourism growth area</u> Quang Tri – Hue – Da Nang	Sporting Sightseeing Sea therapeutic tourism Grotto tourism The World Cultural Heritages Sites at Hue Revolutionary relics at Quang Tri Cham culture at Da Nang and Quang Nam Chinese and Japanese cultures at Hoi An Transit tourism to the Road No.9 and the East-West Corridor

Strategic Tourism Zones	Areas	Product
3. South Central and Southern Zones	1. <u>Tourism micro-zones</u> - South Central part Ho Chi Minh City – Nha trang – Da Lat - Southern part Ho Chi Minh City – Can Tho – Ha Tien – Phu Quoc 2. <u>Tourism growth area</u> Ho Chi Minh City – Dong Nai – Binh Duong – Vung Tau	Sightseeing Sea therapeutic tourism River tourism Eco-tourism in the plain of the Mekong River Delta

Note: The Road No. 9 is the road that connects Phnom Penh and the Thai border.

Related to the three tourism zones, the south central and southern zones have a relatively good transport infrastructure and are easily accessible to the world with an international airport, road network access to Cambodia and Thailand, and waterways connecting to the Mekong River. Ho Chi Minh City as a heart has been earmarked for the development of business centers and tourist resorts (ESCAP, 1996). The Tourism Master Plan also sees a close linkage between natural and heritage tourism in this zone. This includes cultural, architecture and history in conjunction with southern nature treks, both in highlands and along the Mekong River (Cooper, 2000).

The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (2001) formulates the phrasing of development based on the characteristics of the tourist development zones. Phrasing of development to achieve the tourism strategic objectives is projected on the two periods of 2001-2005 and 2006-2010, within a longer period extending to 2020 as provided below:

- During the period of 2001-2005, tourism will be concerted on using the best of existing attractions while upgrading their quality. The emphasis is placed on general nature and cultural tourism and further expansion of beach, marine and mountain resort tourism. The tourism product, marketing, human resource development and public and business management systems will be improved. Measures will be put in place to achieve the sustainability of tourism, including improved management of protected areas and living cultures and provision of the basis for development of eco-tourism and ethnic village tourism. However, protected areas now being properly managed can continue their development of eco-tourism and ethnic village tourism.

- During the period of 2006-2010, a broader range and geographical distribution of tourism products will be offered, notably expansion of mountain eco-tourism and associated ethnic group cultural tourism based on sustainable management. Adventure tourism will also be developed where it is based on sustainable use of resources.

2.4.2. Tourism Development in Cambodia

2.4.2.1. Overview of tourism development policies

Tourism in Cambodia has been accepted as a means to recover the declining economy since the government of Prince Sihanouk in 1969. In the national development context, the National Social and Economic Development (NSED) Plan has a significant influence on the nature of tourism development in Cambodia (MOT, 2003). The direction of plan clearly identifies the primary development goal of the country to reduce poverty. It recognizes that poverty reduction can be achieved through sustainable economic development and growth. In the plan, tourism is seen as a key dynamic in the national economy that can help much to alleviate poverty and provide better income opportunities for indigenous.

Tourism development in Cambodia encounters a number of major issues that can affect the success of tourism industry. The NSED Plan recognizes that action must be taken in infrastructure development, product development, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and economic development through the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises. An immediate task on tourism development is the establishment of an information database of tourism attractions and the forging of a vision that will conduct the formulation of tourism strategies.

In the Second Socioeconomic Development Plan 2001-2005 (SEDP- II), the national economic growth and poverty reduction strategy were uttered. The development vision under this current SEDP-II is intensified to build up a country without poverty, illiteracy and disease. Within this framework, the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) formulated specific policies and objectives of tourism development that emphasized:

1. The importance of integration with overall national development objectives.
2. The potential for tourism to improve the quality of life across the country through economic benefits and facilitating protection of cultural heritage and the natural environment.
3. The need for investment in line with the tourism development policy.
4. The link between a high quality tourism products and appropriate markets.
5. A coordinated approach based on planning, effective management, monitoring and control.

Above all, Cambodia aims to use tourism development that is predominantly based on culture and nature to provide maximum benefits for the Cambodians by ensuring the best possible level of economic contribution and equitable distribution from tourism consistent with protection of resources (ESCAP, 1997). However, Cambodia copes with important challenges in capitalizing on its culture and its people, maintaining its natural and cultural heritage, generating economic activity to reduce poverty while attracting adequate tourists to country. Though tourism has played an important role in Cambodia economic structure for years, Cambodia does not now have a tourism

development plan implemented for all areas of the country (MOT, 2003). A tourism strategy for Cambodia began first with Angkor Wat under the corporate assistance of Singapore in 2001.

The existing tourism development plan (the Cambodian National Tourism Development Plan 2001-2005) is a comprehensive plan that provides medium-term objectives, policies and strategies and is designed to meet the overall national direction of social and economic improvement. With respect to the development of tourism, the major objectives of the Plan are specified based on present government policies such as to generate awareness among the government and citizens about the contribution of tourism in sustainable development, to assist in diversifying Cambodia's tourism product away from Angkor Wat to another area and to adopt a destination management model to develop the key destinations of Cambodia. For example, in the next five years Cambodia will encourage and support tourism in the development triangle of Siem Reap/Greater Phnom Penh/Sihanouk Ville Coastal Zones. Tourism development will also be encouraged and supported in the Northeast area identified as an area for ongoing study and initial infrastructure development (Tirasatayapitak, 2005).

It is noteworthy that the major consideration in preparing the Plan of Cambodia is the need to reduce poverty. The Tourism Plan is projected to integrate into the general development plan of the country. To achieve the objectives of the Plan, the tourism development strategies include core policies focusing on the adoption of the three-point strategy, namely promoting the pro poor tourism strategies, adopting a niche market approach based on development of special interest products and adopting a destination management approach (see Table 2.13).

Strategies	Strategic actions
Pro poor tourism strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of a Cambodia Poverty Reduction Tourism Working Group 2. Pro poverty development zones 3. The creation of the Cambodian partnership for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises 4. Reinvestment in community/ poverty projects 5. Pro poor demonstration projects 6. Defining new pro poor markets
Product development strategies	<p>- Promotion of 4 geographic tourism zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater Phnom Penh 2. Siem Reap and Angkor Complex 3. Sihanouk Ville and Koh Kong (coastal zones area) 4. Northeastern eco-tourism areas <p>- Tourism product development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural heritage tourism: (Established product) 2. Festivals and events: (Established and developing product) 3. Handicrafts: (Established and developing product) 4. Village tourism: (Emerging product) 5. Eco/nature based tourism: (With potential to be developed) 6. Adventure tourism: (With potential to be developed) 7. Coastal zone tourism: (With potential to be developed)
Destination management strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product development and marketing 2. Organization and management structures 3. Destination planning 4. Destination and site operations

Regarding to the Cambodian National Tourism Development Plan 2001-2005 (MOT, 2003 as cited in Tirasatayapitak, 2005), the development concept is emphasized upon the awareness of tourism potential of the cultural and natural resources. The improvement of tourism products is in different stages. One of the challenges is to ensure that the product development is appropriate to the existing conditions of each place. The tourism development strategy captures on the approach of establishing tourism zones with a cluster of different types of attractions and a unique tourism theme appropriate to each zone as promoted in the following 4 geographic zones:

1. Phnom Penh and surrounding areas (Greater Phnom Penh)

These areas offer tourism of the capital, Phnom Penh, mixed with cultural, historical, commercial and political attractions.

2. Siem Reap and the Angkor complex

Siem Reap is considered a center for historical and cultural tourism. This area is designated as a World Heritage site. Destinations in the cultural zone are the Angkor complex and Siem Reap's surrounding temples. These destinations are the high priority historical and archaeological sites of the country.

3. Sihanouk Ville and Koh Kong (coastal zone areas)

The provinces along the coast of Cambodia are Koh Kong, Kep, Sihanouk Ville and Kampot. There are many marine tourism resources lined up on the southwestern coast of Cambodia. Among all provinces, Sihanouk Ville is considered as a center for coastal tourism.

4. Northeastern Eco-tourism area

This tourism zone is comprised of 4 provinces: Mondolkiri, Rattanakiri, Stung Treng and Kratie. The target areas of Mondolkiri and Rattanakiri are considered as a centre for eco-tourism.

2.4.2.2. Tourism product development strategies

In order to support the development of tourism zones, the Plan explains that the cultural tourism is the best developed at present and will continue to be the primary tourism product. It has a noteworthy competitive advantage. The other products can be seen as developing but at the current stage they have little potentially to contribute to overall tourism in the country. The Plan as well identifies several special interest themes and makes recommendations on developing these products as follows:

1. Cultural heritage tourism

There are two major dimensions to the cultural product including the Angkor Wat and the temple sites as well as the living culture. Cultural tourism is regarded as a major force in tourism planning and development. The Plan indicates that this type of product requires multidisciplinary participation to deal with the pressure of preserving culture and using it as a means of generating income. The carrying capacity and conservation are of utmost importance in developing cultural heritage tourism. It is therefore essential that Cambodia employ an integrated professional approach to dealing with various dimensions of its cultural heritage.

2. Handicraft development and marketing

While the availability of handicrafts in Cambodia has the potential to meet visitors' needs, there is a necessity to further develop the quality, uniqueness and design of such products. Encouraging handicraft development is one way that local communities can profit from tourism and thus contribute to poverty alleviation. The emphasis of the Plan should then encourage the young people to consider this kind of product as a workable means to earn their living.

3. Village-based tourism

Village-based tourism can assist the locals in getting the supplementing economic benefits from tourism activities including better quality of life, employment opportunities and conservation of the environment. Nevertheless, an understanding about the capacity of local people and the community to partake in tourism schemes is a very important concern. Village-based tourism can be seen as a major element in the national policy for poverty alleviation. It has been identified under the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Development scheme led by the ADB as one important possibility to address poverty. It is necessary for Cambodia to develop a village-based tourism development policy that seeks to balance the conservation of cultures and environment against income contributions.

4. Nature-based tourism

Eco-tourism and nature based tourism can be developed within the period of the Plan although there are some limitations of infrastructure development. Cambodia must understand the nature and needs of tourists when planning the marketing strategies and developing the products. The priority action of the Plan states that the Ministry of Tourism working in close cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment must develop a specific nature based tourism strategy, especially for the Northeast area.

5. Adventure tourism

In respect to adventure tourism, the issues of access and security in several parts of the country are obstacles for the product development. This kind of product especially serves the niche market and is complemented to other forms of products in Cambodia. The Plan considers that it is unlikely that tourists come to Cambodia only for adventure tourism purposes. The Plan further recommends that the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of the Environment must begin to identify areas where adventure

tourism can take place in an ecologically positive manner and design adventure tourism policies for this emerging tourism activity.

6. Coastal zone tourism

The Plan recognizes that the coastal zone tourism may be developed only in the longer term in order to broaden the range of tourism experiences in Cambodia. Although the coastal areas have the potential resources for developing tourism, they are fairly untapped due to issues of access, pollution, security and lack of tourist facilities. The action recommended in the Plan is that the Ministry of Tourism should begin preliminary work in designing coastal zone tourism policies for this tourism product.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The ASEAN image positioning: the case study of Vietnam and Cambodia was undertaken using qualitative research techniques. Principally, the research objectives of the study had been achieved through the research direction as follows:

1. Desk research
2. Selection of information sources
3. Research tools
4. Data collection
5. Data analysis

3.1. Desk research

The information sources that were used to review the existing physical characteristics, the potential tourism resources, the existing image position of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism and the current situation of tourism development of these two countries were primarily from the secondary data of documentary sources such as from newspaper, new releases, journals, books, the Internet and other relevant research sources.

3.2. Selection of information sources

The researcher aimed to examine the current circumstances of tourism development, the perceived image positioning of tourism products and the potential tourism resources in the countries for study. Purposive selection was used to target the group of key informants needed for focus-group meeting and discussion. The key

informants were selected from public and private tourism-related institutions in Hanoi, Vietnam and Phnom Penh, Cambodia with any one of the qualifications:

1. Be involved in the tourism industry in Vietnam and Cambodia;
2. Have working experiences in tourism business operations;
3. Have experiences in tourism business, tourism planning and development and tourism destination marketing
4. Be specialized in tourism and/or tourism-related field of knowledge

The group of key informants, with experience in the aforementioned activities, was representatives from Cambodia and Vietnam, namely Marketing and Promotion Department and International Cooperation and ASEAN Department, Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia Association of Travel Agents in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Tourism Promotion Board, and General Division of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, Travel Business Management Department of Hanoi Administration of Tourism, International Cooperation Department of Institute for Tourism Development Research, Vietnamtourism in Ho Chi Minh City, OSC Travel (S.M.I. Group) Co.,Ltd in Vietnam and the Area-Based Tourism Research Center for Sustainable Tourism Development, the Thailand Research Fund. A total of 13 individuals provided focus group discussion and in-depth interviews for this research. The sample size for the research was determined by the financial and temporal constraints for the study, which imposed limitations in gathering primary data. Since the field research was comprised of two countries, including Vietnam and Cambodia, the key informants were taken from all two countries. The proportion of interviews and discussion conducted in each country was equally shared.

3.3. Research tools

After review and study of information sources from desk research, the study framework of research objectives was created and described in tabular presentation. The associated research questions, information sources, tools, data collection and data analysis were also determined (see appendix A). The research tools were designed as follows:

1. Researcher was responsible for conducting interviews, focus group discussion, collecting information and analyzing all data, both primary and secondary. During the process of interviewing key informants, the interviews focused on discussion and exchange of opinions on tourism development in Vietnam and Cambodia whether it can be enhanced towards the differentiation of image positioning of tourism and specific promotional theme of tourism products and what promotional theme of tourism products is the most appropriate for use in the context of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism with representatives from public and private tourism-related institutions in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Hanoi, Vietnam.

2. Structured interviews were used as the qualitative research tool to collect the primary data (see appendices B, D). The structured interviews were comprised of a mix of questions both open and closed. Interview questions were designed using the following procedures:

2.1. Information studied from review of literature and SWOT analysis was used to construct the first draft of questions for interviews.

2.2. Professionals with any one of the following qualifications piloted the first draft of interview questions:

- Specialize in tourism and/or tourism-related field of knowledge
- Specialize in research methodology
- Have done research related to tourism management and development and/or any tourism-related topics

2.3. Comments on the pilot of the first draft were used to improve the second draft of interview questions.

2.4. The same group of professionals mentioned above approved the second draft of the instrument.

2.5. Comments and recommendations were sincerely reviewed in order to establish the final sets of interview questions that were used for the focus-group discussion.

2.6. Interview questions and the proposed SWOT analysis were translated in Vietnamese in order to help facilitate the focus-group discussion (see appendix C).

2.7. Final sets of questions used for discussion and personal in-depth Interviews were established. The interview was comprised of four parts as follows:

The 1st part was composed of 1 main question about opinions of the SWOT analysis of tourism development in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The 2nd part was composed of 3 open-ended questions and 3-closed question with 4 sub-questions about opinions of tourism development and destination marketing in Vietnam and Cambodia. The assessed level was used to see the tendency of thinking from respondents.

The 3rd part was composed of 2 main questions. An open format was employed to investigate the opinions of the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia.

3. The note form for the primary data was used to write down all primary data gathered from interviews, issues and opinions presented by the key informants.

4. Microsettes were used to record all conversations and discussions during the interviews and meetings and they were reviewed during the process of data analysis.

3.4. Data collection

In summary, the researcher collected data as follows:

1. Primary data were collected from the personal in-depth interviews and focus group discussion in the direction of the cross-sectional approach. Purposive selection was used to target the group of key informants needed. Judgment for inclusion was guided by the criteria mentioned above in the context of selection of information sources.

2. Secondary data were collected from studies of relevant documents.

3.5. Data analysis

To achieve the objectives of the research study that aim to propose the promotional theme of tourism products and potential tourist attractions related to the promotional theme to be promoted for Vietnam and Cambodia that could mutually enhance the competitiveness in tourism product development and tourism destination marketing and promote the global image of ASEAN tourism as one single destination with many-sided tourism characteristics, the analyses were regularly undertaken during the study. The major methods for analysing the primary data will be as follows:

3.5.1. Categorization of general information

Information was sorted into headed categories. Content was considered in relation to the research objectives and the conceptual framework.

3.5.2. Content analysis

The primary data gathered from peer review, interviews and focus-group discussion were grouped into categories. Findings were analyzed with the intention to answer the research problem as follows:

1. What is the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia?
2. What is the existing image position of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism?
3. What are the threats and problems of the collaborative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia?
4. What measures could be undertaken to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia?

Results of the analysis were explained in descriptive presentation to identify the most appropriate promotional theme of tourism products for use in the context of Vietnam and Cambodia tourism and the most fitting tourist attractions to be promoted for each promotional theme.

Summarily, the study process of this project was divided in major 6 steps as follows:

1st Step: Review of literature to determine the conceptual framework of study and conduct the SWOT analysis of the existing physical characteristics, the current situation of tourism development and the potential tourism resources and appoint the key informants for interviews and focus-group discussion.

2nd Step: Peer review of questions for the structure interview and the proposed SWOT analysis of the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia.

3rd Step: Translate the proposed SWOT analysis of the current situation of tourism development and the questions for semi-structure interview in Vietnamese.

4th Step: Meet the key informants in the countries for study for personal in-depth interview and focus group discussion.

5th Step: Revise the SWOT analysis of the current situation of tourism development, the image positioning and specific promotional theme of tourism products and in Vietnam and Cambodia according to the agreement of the key informants from the focus group discussion and resend the revision paper to the key informants in both countries as references.

6th Step: Prepare the final report and the academic paper concerning the topic of study for Vietnam and Cambodia.

CHAPTER 4

ASEAN IMAGE POSITIONING: THE CASE STUDY OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA (ANALYSIS AND RESULTS)

With respect to the study of the ASEAN image positioning: the case of Vietnam and Cambodia, qualitative research techniques were used in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The primary data gathered from the focus-group discussion about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of tourism development as well as opinions of tourism development and destination marketing was analysed. The opinions of the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia were also investigated in order to examine the threats and problems of such collaborative networks and the consolidate measures that could be undertaken to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in both countries to help strengthen the tourism destination marketing and the tourism product development. Respectively, the comprehensive results of data analysis were explained and discussed in descriptive presentation.

In reference to the objectives of the study, a detailed study of the ASEAN image positioning for Vietnam and Cambodia will be presented. It will consist of 3 sections as follows:

Section 1: SWOT analysis of the current tourism development

Section 2: Tourism product development and destination marketing

Section 3: Collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia

SECTION 1: SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The ASEAN region is physically prosperous in cultural, historical and natural features. Vietnam and Cambodia exploit the settlement of tourism resources in their countries for development of various tourism products and activities. Vietnam and Cambodia are evidently found to be in the different level of readiness and potential on tourism development. However, the competitive advantages of these two countries could be seen as complementary.

The situation facing the tourism development and the image positioning in Vietnam and Cambodia can be evaluated by a detailed consideration of strengths and weaknesses of its current operations and from the environmental influences for threats and opportunities. Assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is a universally employed practice to analyze development potential and current management of an area. The conclusion of a SWOT analysis, which reviews the tourism development and potential positioning of tourism image in Vietnam and Cambodia is as follows set forth:

4.1.1. Assessment of Tourism Development in Vietnam

4.1.1.1. Potential internal strengths

1. Vietnam possesses the unique physical and social characteristics as well as culture that greatly provide the variable diversity of tourism resources. The tourism potential of Vietnam is very wealthy in nature and humanity. From a cultural perspective, Vietnam offers rich historical sites, architectural monuments, French colonial architecture, Indo-Chinese cultural heritage and war memorial. These resources are spreading in all regions of the country. According to the Revised Master Plan of Vietnam Tourism Development 2003-2010, Vietnam has a bundle of attractions to offer ranging

from historical attractions, cultural sites and natural attractions spanning across the country including 3 tourism zones, 7 tourism development priority areas and 12 tourism urban areas such as Ha Long, Sapa, Do Son, Sam Son, Cua Lo, Hue, Hoi An, Nha Trang, Da Lat, Vung Tau, Phan Thiet and Ha Tien. Vietnam offers more than 80 major tourism destinations with 4 of which are complex tourism resorts and 31 special tourism resorts. Some attractions are well known at the worldwide scale as World Heritage Sites. Recently, Vietnam possesses 7 World Heritage Sites including 2 natural heritage sites (Ha Long Bay; Phong Nha – Ke Bang national park and cave), 3 cultural heritage sites (Hue Imperial, Hoi An ancient town and My Son sanctuary) and 2 intangible cultural heritages. There are virtually 2,900 historical relics all over the country. In addition, Vietnam also has 107 protected areas with 29 national parks, 44 reserves, 34 cultural historic and environment forests as well as a large number of festivals and cultural events that appeal tourists to experience the charm of Vietnam.

2. There are many pristine and untapped tourism resources in the boundary of country. The historical heritage of Vietnam is still largely unknown. These attractions could be developed to enlarge the product lines as alternative eye-catching projects to cater to niche markets.

3. According to a rich and valuable natural biodiversity and habitats, there is a high potential for development of ecotourism, nature-based tourism and adventure tourism, for instance, the area of the Mekong Delta and the mountainous area in the central part of Vietnam. There is a noteworthy possibility for high growth rate of tourism development and expansion in these areas.

4. The combination of natural and cultural tourism resources forms a strong basis to develop unique tourism products and has the potential to make Vietnam an attractive destination in ASEAN for beach holidays and visiting natural, historical and cultural attractions.

location for international communication of Vietnam, the government has good conditions for developing the transportation networks by airways, road, rail and sea linking with other countries in the region and the world.

10. Vietnam is geographically located adjacent to the growing tourism markets such as Asia-Pacific and the regional markets of the Greater Mekong Sub-region where the expansion of economic terms is very remarkable and people in the region have more purchasing power. Then, Vietnam could advantage from this condition to offering the competitive product prices and cater the tourists for the all year round.

11. The renovation and open door policy have stimulated the economic growth, favorable conditions for foreign economic relations and the great potentials in development of the whole country. Vietnam concurrently develops the accommodation facilities, upgrades the infrastructure and leisure complexes in the major tourist areas of country.

12. The economic, quality of living standards and social infrastructure of Vietnam have been gradually upgraded. These advantages reinforce the complimentary conditions of the exploitation of tourism potentials, development of tourism attractions and touring circuits and promote higher demand in domestic tourism.

13. Regarding to a stable and supportive government, Vietnam has set up the foundation to create a new foreign trade system such as the banking system and liberalizing foreign exchange that would augment the number of trading companies and fast economic growth. Many legal documents relating to tourism have been issued and supplemented as Business Law, Law on Foreign Investment in Vietnam that create the healthier environment and a legal corridor for tourism development.

14. Vietnam has revised the Foreign Investment Law, which provides high opportunities for joint ventures between the foreigners and local partners in the tourism industry.

15. The Vietnam government determined tourism as the spearhead economic sector in national industrialization. The government has paid much attention in leading

the tourism development of the country. As such, the National Administration of Tourism has launched succession of promotion in various key markets in the world that help intensify the perceptive understanding of Vietnam by the world and result in the increasing number of tourists.

16. Vietnam has paid attention to preserving the natural and cultural resources of the country towards the close cooperation with Ministries and local governments to establish the master plans for tourism development.

17. The Vietnam government paid serious attention to the development of human resources for the tourism industry in terms of training content and system specialized in tourism from vocational to a high level of education. As a consequence, Vietnam labor force has a high level of literacy. The labor force in Vietnam is a great resource to tourism industry development.

18. Vietnam has applied bilateral visas exemption to facilitate the travel for citizens from six ASEAN countries, namely Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Singapore. This contributes positively to rapid growth rate of international arrivals to the country.

4.1.1.2. Potential internal weaknesses

1. Exploitation of tourism resources depends mainly on the natural resources, which are pristine. The experience of business operation management and professional skills of the officials are still limited. Not many tourism development projects in key attractions have been carried out an environmental impact assessment. Then, there is a high risk of damaging natural ecosystem and resources of the area. The conservation and development of resources and environmental protection are still inadequate which seriously affects the achievement of sustainable development.

2. Tourism resources and environment are degraded due to the improper exploitation and increasing impacts by natural disasters which have been occurring in many areas of the country.

3. There is insufficient strict control and implementation of tourism master plan on exploiting coastal and sea resources. This causes many damages to the environment of the coastal areas. Vietnam is facing the barrier of limited effectiveness of management in terms of the use of tourism resources and cooperation in developing tourism products.

4. The current large scale of marine tourism environment is very easy to be destroyed by modern geographic process and the impact of human activities. The high density of tourists, concentrated in only few resorts has created an unacceptable stress, which can destroy the natural value of the area (www.vub.ac.be).

5. Though the country has specific environmental regulations for tourism destinations to preserve and protect environment sites but the weak implementation of such regulations in some important areas such as Halong and Danang results in serious damages caused by other economic activities, insufficient protection of the public interest and the environment. It is very risk that Vietnam would face the same environmental problems as occurred in Thailand if the government does not protect the natural resources now. The environmental problem may harm the tourism industry in the long term.

6. Tourism in Vietnam has developed so fast since last year. It will be quite difficult to control the rapid expansion of the national tourism industry since there is insufficient appropriate tourism management expertise in Vietnam. As a result, the management from the central and local government cannot accomplish the high degree of development.

7. The development of accommodation facilities is very fast. The number of hotel capacities is over-exceeding than the tourists' demand in some destinations such as in Halong and Danang City due to several factors such as improvement of transportation

system and changes of tourists' need. The local authority does not keep control on the numbers of hotel expansion. They do not conduct the marketing survey, research and feasibility of demand structure. Obviously, huge demand of hotel development has been introduced in Hanoi but there are still inadequate high quality hotels in this city as well as throughout the country. Hence, there is a need to balance the demand of all ranking.

8. The replacement of international atmosphere could be widely seen in most major tourist destinations of Vietnam.

9. Vietnam does not have adequate financial resources to develop basic infrastructure which can meet the requirement of economic development and tourism development such as the accessibility, communication system and development of tourism circuits and attractions in the mountainous, island and remote areas.

10. The transportation connections are not very convenient and low in frequency. Additionally, inaccessibility could be affected from the difficulty of frontier formalities and the rigid customs.

11. Socio-economic development levels and residents' living standard in Vietnam are still low which affect the supply and demand relationship for tourism development.

12. Social awareness on tourism is still insufficient. The low participation from local communities and local officials, especially in the decision-making on tourism planning, activities and controlling the areas is very critical. There is a lack of tourism training and education plans for local people.

13. While the current practice of Vietnam's tourism is positive, the burdensome levels of bureaucracy and various unnecessary regulations interfere the market activities and play critical roles as obstacles to tourism growth. The tourism related agents are obstructed with national politics and bureaucracy. Vietnam still individually strictly controls the trade and economic development within the country by establishing rules and regulations and administrative system.

14. Corruption and bureaucracy in certain segments of public and private sectors remain uncontrolled although the government pushes efforts to eliminate this problem.

15. Vietnam implements the process of enacting the necessary laws and decrees in the legal system such as contracting, banking system, property rights and foreign investment laws. The existing difficulty is mainly caused by uncertainty and inconsistency in interpreting the laws. Different authorities put policies into practice according to their own interpretations, which make foreign investors confused.

16. Besides the private and joint venture businesses, some firms in Vietnam are currently the state-owned company. Most state-owned properties exist as independent units. This often causes many problems in business operations such as the funding, the separation of the firm management and ownership that would lead to poor supervising of the State resources. However, there is a tendency to change the business system. After being the member of World Trade Organization by the end of 2006, most state-owned companies will develop into the private firms.

17. There are no investment codes specific for tourism. The investor encounters the financial risk of high upfront cost with longer payback period, especially for the hotel projects.

18. There are insufficient conditions for small and medium enterprises in order to activate all resources for tourism development and disperse mutual benefits to the communities.

19. Tourism infrastructure, especially airports and seaports, which can be international gateways and serve the tourist flows from countries in the region have yet to meet the development requirement.

20. The tourism attractions has not been competently presented and integrated into the tourism markets.

21. Vietnam is facing the shortage of highly trained and qualified persons who can carry out well the cooperative marketing. The number of competitive tourism

products is still limited. Marketing and promotion and branding have yet to meet the demand of the present prospective markets.

22. Service in Vietnam is still poor. The pricing system is still critical and lacks of standards. It will degrade the overall quality of service standards and competencies to carry on Vietnam's competitiveness among destinations in the region.

23. There is a lack of professional labor force in serving the tourism industry. The turnover rate of employees in the industry is high.

24. Provision of education for community about protection of the tourism environment is required to urgently improve.

4.1.1.3. Potential external opportunities

1. The effective collaboration on tourism development among countries in the region will be the significant opportunity for mutual tourism development to create the multi-tourism circuits and expand the product lines.

2. The growth rate of tourism development in the region is high. Hence, there is a high possibility to exchange tourist flows with other member countries and integrate in the regional development policy as a partner of single tourist destination.

3. The US Foreign Commercial Service of the American Embassy in Singapore regularly published information about hotel and resort projects in Vietnam that are seeking foreign joint-venture partners. This helps enhance the opportunity for looking for potential foreign business partners to collaborate in tourism development (www.scholar.lib.vt.edu).

4. The assistance of World Tourism organization, ASIANTA, PATA and the technical assistance projects by EU help provide the training for human resource development.

5. The peaceful atmosphere in the region enhances the potential opportunity for investment in tourism.

6. The development of basic infrastructure and facilities throughout the region contributes the dispersion of tourism growth.
7. Globalization, peace, cooperation and development in technology rapidly develop world tourism, which illustrate the tourist demand toward South East Asia and Pacific. This is the good opportunity for Vietnam tourism to be developed.
8. The overall commitment to a sub-regional tourism development agenda among six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region remains strong.
9. The strategy to develop and promote the priority tourism zones and touring circuits along the Mekong River that contains most of the sub-region's major tourism resources has the potential to make a substantial contribution to mutual sustainable development and poverty alleviation.
10. Most of big airlines provide direct flights to the main cities of Vietnam such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang, Hai Phong (from Macau) and Dalat (from Singapore). This greatly facilitates the infrastructural accessibility from the major market regions.
11. Promoting the Greater Mekong Sub-region as single destination based on a bundle of cultural and natural products will hearten a sense of mission among stakeholders in all countries concerned to partake in sub-regional tourism promotion and development activities.
12. The international acceptance for Vietnam to be the member of World Trade Organization (WTO) by the end of 2006 will significantly enhance the positive image of Vietnam and provide more opportunities and the assistance in cooperative development in tourism.

4.1.1.4. Potential external threats

1. The development of basic infrastructure such as road connections in the region takes too long time.

2. The difficulty in empowering the investment from the regional economic system in the development affects from the disparity of development of monetary and banking system in each country.

3. The market segmentation, positioning and branding practices of the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region are not clearly defined. The marketing capabilities of most GMS national tourism organizations are limited in terms of the weak destination marketing management, capacities and lack of adequate funding.

4. The balance between economic development and environmental degradation is going to be crucial. The inability to implement sustainable development principles and practices at the natural and cultural resource management level and at the community level may cause the potentially adverse environmental impacts.

5. The conflict of interests in sharing tourism resources pool among member countries in the region may be a result of incorrect assumption that the tourist going to another country are actually tourists who would come to their own country.

6. The effective pro-poor tourism development principles and practices as well as the assurance that all stakeholders in the regional tourism system are engaged in the process to maximize the commitment are still not applied.

7. The tourism industry's contribution to poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development is restricted and the reimbursement is disproportionately distributed all through the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

8. The competition between the destinations all over the world is increasingly serious since these countries aim at tourism as a means to boost the economic mechanism and retain the existing shares in the markets. Then, the search for new potential buyers is becoming intense.

9. The energy shortage may cause the high cost in investment and tourism business operation.

10. The crucial difference in standard quality of products, services and prices greatly affects the tourists' satisfaction.

4.1.2. Assessment of Tourism Development in Cambodia

4.1.2.1. Potential internal strengths

1. There are a bundle of pristine attractions that have yet to be developed and promoted. These places possess high potential of unique natural attractions, biodiversity and well associated with culture for the development as tourist attractions in the future, for instance, extensive mostly undeveloped white sandy beaches on the mainland and offshore islands in the southern coastal areas of Cambodia. Cambodia holds a specific characteristic based on its resources and market image. Though people well recognize this country from the glorious world heritage site of Angkor Wat, the country alternatively offers attractions to visit ranging from 29 historical attractions, 6 archeological sites, 6 natural attractions and specific topography of Great Lake and the Mekong River. All these 41 tourist attractions are mainly located in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Kampong Thom. In addition, Cambodia also has festivals and cultural events that appeal tourists to experience.

2. The major tourist destinations in Cambodia have been developed and promoted as "**The Jewel of Mekong**" in various characteristics to serve the needs and interests of the target markets. These attractions hold high potential to be promoted as multi-tourism circuits linking with destinations in other member countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region such as Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Main tourism areas are as follows:

-**Phnom Penh:** the capital city and its surrounding include Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum, Toul Sleng Museum, Udong, Tonle Bati, Phnom Chiso, Mekong River.

-**Siem Reap:** home of Cambodia's famous Angkor Wat complex is the main tourism draw card and the most visited place in Cambodia. The ancient World Heritage listed Angkor Wat temples have played a key role in opus destiny for over 1000 years. Today they still present some of the greatest challenges and opportunities for cultural tourism and the international community.

-**Coastal zone:** Sihanouk Ville, Koh Kong, Kep, Kompot, the premier beach resort

-**Eco-tourism** in the northeast provinces, Ratanakiri, Mondulhiri & Stoeung Treng.

Cambodia furthermore offers the important cluster of attractions that are significant to complementarily promote the tourism network of attractions in the group of the Jewel of Mekong:

- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Thom
- Kratie
- Stung Treng

3. Cambodia is rich in assortment of the cultural and historical heritages and natural coastal features. These features are suitable to diversify the development of tourism products and activities away from Siem Reap to other areas of country.

4. The southern coast of Cambodia is connecting with the coastal areas of its neighbors as Thailand and Vietnam. Cambodia would gain the benefits from the tourists' visit in the area and the integration of tourism development.

5. The main attraction in the southern coast as Sihanouk Ville has a relative proximity and good road access to Phnom Penh. This area provides the scenic beauty

of the city environment setting and scenic offshore islands, which is a good marine area for diving and fishing as well as for developing cruise ship tourism.

6. Cambodia has a progressive policy to promote tourism as the foremost instrument to enhance economic development, alleviate poverty and provide better income opportunities to the residents. This greatly helps encourage the development and investment in tourism.

7. The government has positioned tourism as a high priority in the national development plan. In supporting tourism development, human resources are very crucial to be developed. The government officials are sent for undertaking the training courses abroad such as in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and Europe.

8. The more liberated open sky policy can facilitate the opening of airway routes, the tourist flows to the country and help promote international tourism and provide more access to country.

9. The tourism development policy from the government significantly stimulates the expansion of tourism development and investment in all dimensions.

10. According to the investment reforms, a new and relaxed foreign investment law allows a 70-year land lease to attract more joint-venture hotel projects. The new law also offers eight-year tax incentives, which allows the foreign companies to freely repatriate profits and import overseas staff for joint ventures.

11. Cambodia widely opens for business and investment which offers overseas and local companies attractive and competitive incentives in terms of relaxation of investment application form, investment laws, taxation barriers in line with establishment of political stability, infrastructure and human resources.

12. The government takes initiatives and concentrates in the development and construction of tourism infrastructure, roads, access to tourist sites, airports, harbors, recreation centers, eco-tourism sites and other major related tourism development. Several road projects are in progress of construction under the assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB) such as road no. 2 from the Vietnam border via Takeo

Province to Phnom Penh, road no. 5, 6 from Skun to Siem Reap and from Thai border to Siem Reap, road no.7 in Eastern Cambodia and road from Thnal Totoeung via Snoul to Kratie. Some projects will commence soon such as road to Laos border via Stung Treng and road no. 78 from the Vietnam border to Ratanakiri.

13. Cambodia is working closely with neighboring countries, namely Thailand, Vietnam and Laos to open up more international borders and to facilitate border-crossing procedures between these countries and Cambodia.

14. There is a strong and stable government commitment to create a business-friendly environment that greatly helps enhance the tourism development in the country.

15. Cambodia is situated in the good geographic location. Cambodia sits on major trade lanes and has access to major gateways of Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City (www.un.org.kh).

4.1.2.2. Potential internal weaknesses

1. The infrastructural accessibility including the frequency and quality of transportation linkages between destinations of origin with Cambodia need to be expanded. The transportation networks in Cambodia do not provide many options to all varieties of rich natural and cultural attractions throughout the country that would affect the promotion and development of tourist attractions.

2. Insufficient basic infrastructure and facilities for tourism, for example; water supply, electric power, waste management, telecommunications, poor existing airport facilities and very limited air access crucially affect the promotion and the operation of tourism in other areas of country besides Angkor Wat, Phnom Penh and Sihanouk Ville. Some tourism activities such as adventure tourism cannot be promoted for the reasons of safety and security.

3. There are no clear policies that encourage the use of domestic products and services for the tourism industry. Cambodia is facing the barriers in management, the tourism economic leakages occurring from the use of an imported skilled workforce and luxury products and money spent on marketing.

4. The most supplies and equipments have been imported from Thailand, Vietnam, China and Korea. Then, the operating costs are passed on to the guests. This makes Cambodia a more expensive and less competitive destination than its neighbors. In addition, the energy is expensive and widely unavailable in rural areas (www.un.org.kh).

5. The ownership, concession and expectation of land are of concern for tourism operation and development in Cambodia.

6. Cambodia is one nation where poverty appears to be falling rather slowly though economic growth is reasonably rapid. Measured poverty has been reduced but poverty levels in Cambodia remain slightly change.

7. Cambodia needs more systematic tourism development and management with participation and cooperation from public, private and all stakeholders involved.

8. Cambodia has a tourism development plan implemented for all areas of the country but implementation needs to be accelerated. The significant growth of tourism development is largely centered on Angkor Wat. This would be an obstacle to development of basic infrastructure and allocation of funds.

9. There is a lack of collection of reliable information on present and potential tourist attractions, a comprehensive marketing research and development strategy in order to better plan and develop tourism activities. The tourism attractions has not been competently presented and integrated into the tourism markets.

10. The systematic planning for long-term scale needs to be focused. The current development is mainly based on the top-down policy. The appropriate vision, planning and management for the whole tourism system are critical. The appropriate

coordination in management between the central government agencies and local administrative firms is needed.

11. The promotion and marketing have encountered the current huge differences in the available accommodation capacity and standard of services and quality comparing to other more developed countries in the region such as Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia.

12. Cambodia is facing the shortage of highly trained and qualified persons who can carry out well the cooperative marketing. The value-added tourism products are not yet designed to lengthen tourists' period of stay in Cambodia. The number of competitive tourism products is still limited. Marketing and promotion and branding have yet to meet the demand of the present prospective markets.

13. Lack of funds is a crucial issue for Cambodia. The country does not have adequate financial resources to develop basic infrastructure, which can meet the requirement of economic development and tourism development such as the accessibility, communication system and development of tourism circuits and attractions.

14. Natural resources are lack of awareness in preserving and extensively consumed. There is a lack of simultaneous planning and strict control for exploiting natural resources. This causes many damages to the environment of many protected areas. Cambodia is facing the barrier of limited effectiveness of management in terms of the use of tourism resources and cooperation in developing tourism products.

15. Sihanouk Ville holds a weak promotion and marketing strategy as a beach and marine resort destination. There is very limited beach resort development. Existing facilities and services are not of international standard and generally poor quality of tourist facilities could be found elsewhere in the area.

16. Seasonality is a major influence on tourism industry. Monsoon rains detract from year-round tourism.

17. Tourism competition in the country is high. The pricing system is still critical and lacks of standards. Cutting down prices is often used as the major marketing strategy to attract more businesses. Product prices are high and variable. There is a lack of tourism product diversities, quality and alternatives. It will degrade the overall quality of service standards and competencies to carry on Cambodia's competitiveness among destinations in the region.

18. An unskilled and uneducated labor force is one of the major deficiencies. Cambodia found short of experienced human resources working in tourism or alternatively the funds to train the new employees. The human resource base for tourism will not be improved within the short period of time.

19. Promoting readiness of local administrations in order to transfer the responsibility of management from the central government to their hands is lacking. People do not have good knowledge and understanding of tourism. The involvement from local communities and local officials in the process of tourism development and management is low, especially in the decision-making process and controlling the areas.

4.1.2.3. Potential external opportunities

1. Regional political stability helps stimulate the growth of tourism development. The countries in the region are seeking for the collaboration in order to enhance the tourism in the region. When they have exploited the connecting tourism resources to create the multi-tourism circuits as a single tourist destination, this will be the significant opportunity for the global tourism development.

2. The volume of visitor arrivals and growth rate of tourism development in the neighboring countries is high. Therefore, there is a high possibility to exchange tourist with other member countries and integrate in the regional development policy as a partner of single tourist destination.

3. The effective collaboration on tourism development among countries in the region will be the significant opportunity for mutual tourism development to create the multi-tourism circuits and expand the product lines.

4. The collaboration in the East-West Economic Corridor provides the possibility for the development of the overland route transportation, rapid infrastructure development such as accommodations and transportation networks.

5. The peaceful atmosphere in the region enhances the potential opportunity for investment in tourism.

6. The development of basic infrastructure and facilities throughout the ASEAN region contributes the dispersion of tourism growth.

7. Globalization, peace, cooperation and development in technology rapidly develop the world tourism, which illustrates the tourist demand toward South East Asia and Pacific. This is the good opportunity for Cambodia tourism to be developed.

8. The international acceptance from ASEAN, GMS, WTO, PATA, CLMT, CLMTV, and ACMECS significantly enhances the positive image of Cambodia and provides more opportunities and the assistance in cooperative development in tourism.

9. The overall commitment to a sub-regional tourism development agenda among six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region remains strong.

10. The strategy to develop and promote the priority tourism zones and touring circuits along the Mekong River that contains most of the sub-region's major tourism resources has the potential to make a substantial contribution to mutual sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

11. Promoting the Greater Mekong Sub-region as single destination based on a bundle of cultural and natural products will hearten a sense of mission among stakeholders in all countries concerned to partake in sub-regional tourism promotion and development activities.

4.1.2.4. Potential external threats

1. The development of basic infrastructure such as road connections in the region takes too long time.

2. The difficulty in empowering the investment from the regional economic system in the development affects from the disparity of development of monetary and banking system in each country.

3. The market segmentation, positioning and branding practices of the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region are not clearly defined. The marketing capabilities of most GMS national tourism organizations are limited in terms of the weak destination marketing management, capacities and lack of adequate funding.

4. The balance between economic development and environmental degradation is going to be crucial. The inability to implement sustainable development principles and practices at the natural and cultural resource management level and at the community level may cause the potentially adverse environmental impacts.

5. The conflict of interests in sharing tourism resources pool among member countries in the region may be a result of incorrect assumption that the tourists going to another country are actually tourists who would come to their own country.

6. The effective pro-poor tourism development principles and practices as well as the assurance that all stakeholders in the regional tourism system are engaged in the process to maximize the commitment are still not applied.

7. The tourism industry's contribution to poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development is restricted and the reimbursement is disproportionately distributed all through the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

8. The competition between the destinations all over the world is increasingly serious since these countries aim at tourism as a means to boost the economic mechanism and retain the existing shares in the markets. Then, the search for new potential buyers is becoming powerful.

9. The energy shortage may cause the high cost in investment and tourism business operation.

10. The crucial difference in standard quality of products, services and prices greatly affects the tourists' satisfaction.

11. Cambodia is encountering high competition from other well-developed beach resort areas and newborn destinations in Southeast Asia.

12. Higher petroleum prices have a difficult impact on the Cambodian economy.

SECTION 2: TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

The assortment of physical and cultural contexts in Vietnam and Cambodia appreciably plays an essential role to attract tourists worldwide to explore and experience their heritages. In general, tourists could visit Vietnam and Cambodia the whole year round. According to the statistics of tourist arrivals to the two countries, tourists visits these nations the most during the period from October to April for they could enjoy the pleasant weather of the areas during the winter and dry season. Vietnam and Cambodia have greatly gained extensive interest among visitors and tour operators as newborn destinations for tourism in the ASEAN region. Given that both countries are in the introduction stage of tourism development, the charm and heritage of the Angkor remains and the Khmer civilization in Cambodia as well as the mixed cultures and beauty of nature in Vietnam now extensively call visitors from around the world to experience the mystical sense of areas.

4.2.1. Opinion on the image positioning of Vietnam tourism

Regarding to the focus group discussion, the respondents have expressed slightly different points of view on the existing image position of Vietnam tourism. Some considered that the existing image position is different from the ASEAN neighboring countries while some confirmed that the concurrent tourism image position is similar to other regional countries.

In the analysis of the perception of tourism destination marketing, the respondents were also encouraged to discuss on what elements or aspects could be used as a symbol to promote tourism in Vietnam. The majority of the respondents very strongly affirm that beauty of nature could be used as a symbol for promoting Vietnam tourism at the highest level. Comparing the perceived level of prospective elements being used as a symbol for marketing the destination, the respondents agreed that the cultural and heritage prosperity could also be used as symbol to promote tourism. In another vein, the long trace of history and ways of life are also interesting to be used as another alternative element for national marketing.

In the meantime, the respective respondents highly supported that the natural and cultural tourism activity extensively influences visitors to visit this country. Then, this type of tourism is the most appropriate influential promotional theme of tourism products in Vietnam. Additionally, the same respondents stated that historic-cultural tourism could also be used as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to Vietnam. The health tourism and shopping tourism gains the low interests from the public and private sectors to be used as the promotional tool.

In recent times, Vietnam has offered an array of choices of attractions that provide opportunity for the natural and cultural tourism and the historic-cultural tourism. With respect to such major and minor promotional themes of tourism products, the fashionable presented attractions and the new attractions, which have potential in being developed for tourism to serve up such themes, are listed in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14: Promotional themes of tourism products and related attractions in Vietnam

	The Major Promotional Theme (Natural and cultural tourism)	The Minor Promotional Theme (Historic-cultural tourism)
The presented attractions	Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island Hanoi Hue Hoi An Danang - Myson Ho Chi Minh City The Mekong Delta Sapa Phan Thiet Nha Trang	The Tay Nguyen Central Highland
The new attractions	Phu Quoc Island Den Hung Thien Cam	Dien Bien Phu Quang Tri

4.2.1.1. Attractions related to the major promotional theme of natural and cultural tourism

The tourism potential of Vietnam is very rich in both nature and humanity. These tourist resources are clustered into groups spreading along coastal areas by the Pan-Vietnam National road, near to the big cities and the important border-gates, thereby creating good conditions for planning, and setting up the large tourist centres of Vietnam (Vu Tuan Canh, 2000). According to the interviews, the fashionable attractions

related to the major promotional theme of natural and cultural tourism that are often currently included in the tour packages are the Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island, Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An, Danang – Myson, Ho Chi Minh City, the Mekong Delta, Sapa, Phan Thiet and Nha Trang. In addition, Phu Quoc Island, Den Hung and Thien Cam also have potential to be promoted in the future to serve the natural and cultural tourism.

4.2.1.1.1. Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island

Ha Long, known as Bay of the Descending Dragon in Vietnamese, is recognized as the eighth wonder of the world and the 2nd of the four listed World Heritages of Vietnam. Ha Long comprises 2,000 limestone and dolomite islands and islets with numerous grottoes, stretching on the area of 1,500 square km wide in the Tonkin Gulf of the South China Sea (www.threeland.com). One of the main attractions of Ha Long is the bay's calm water and the thousands of limestone-mountains topped with the thick jungle vegetation dotting the seascape. The Bay's water is clear during the spring and early summer. Some of the islands are quite large and there are small alcoves with sandy beaches where swimming is possible.

Ha Long Bay's limestone islands are spotted with caves of all sizes and shapes. Most of these are accessible only by charter boat but some can easily be visited on tour such as Hang Dau Go (Wooden Stakes Cave), Hang Sung Sot (Surprising Cave) and Hang Trong (Drum Grotto). Hang Dau Go (Wooden Stakes Cave) is the largest grotto in the Ha Long area. Some of the islands support floating villages of fishermen (www.halongbay-vietnam.com).

Ha Long attracts around 90% of visitors coming to Vietnam. The tourists who have visited Guilin (China) and Phang- Nga (Thailand) often make a comparison for their similar shape and geographical structure. Ha Long Bay lies in the northeastern part of Vietnam and is 165 Km from Hanoi (www.vietscape.com). It takes not more than 3 hours to go straight to the Bay. However, the tourists love to stop to visit the paddy fields, the

daily life of farmers and clay workmen, the green bean town and the ceramic town on the new way (www.threeland.com).



Source: www.traveljournals.net, www.vietscape.com

Cat Ba Island is situated in Ha Long Bay, 50 km to the east of Hai Phong City in northern Vietnam. It is the largest of 366 islands in the Cat Ba Archipelago and has a surface area of about 140 square km. The Cat Ba was approved as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (www.Halongbay-Vietnam.com). A trip to Cat Ba Island can be separated or combined with a visit to Ha Long Bay. With an area of 356 square km wide, Cat Ba encompasses forested zones, coastal mangrove and freshwater swamps, beaches, caves, and waterfalls. In 1986, the Northeast side of the island was designated a National Park, including a protected marine zone. Cat Ba Island supports a population

of over 20,000, most of who live off fishing or farming in the South, in and around Cat Ba Town. The town is small and ancient, with clusters of fishing boats and inspiring sunsets across the harbour (www.threeland.com).



Source: www.threeland.com

The island has a few fishing villages and a small town. On the east side of the island, Lan Ha Bay is the interesting attraction which has numerous beaches and excellent scenery. There are two white sand beaches (Cat Co 1 and Cat Co 2) located 1 km from Cat Ba town. The two beaches are connected by a wooden walkway about 700 metres long. The best time to visit Cat Ba is during October and November. Temperatures are a little cool from December to February, and you can expect rain during March and April. June through to August is hot and humid (www.accessivevietnam.net).

4.2.1.1.2. Hanoi

Hanoi, a home to about 4 million people, is a very pleasant city with lakes, trees and full of culture. As the capital of Vietnam for almost a thousand years, Hanoi is considered to be the cultural center of Vietnam where every dynasty has left behind their imprint. Even though some relics have not survived through wars and time, the city still has many interesting cultural and historic monuments for visitors and residents alike

(www.en.wikipedia.org). Hanoi is gradually changing with an increasing number of hotels, restaurants, and sidewalk hawkers. Less vibrant and more reserved than its cousin to the south, Hanoi is a great place to explore on foot. When Ho Chi Minh City is busy with hurry-up people on the move, Hanoi's trademark is green parks and tranquil lakes (www.footprintsvietnam.com).

The city of Hanoi is divided into districts, many of which take their name from a lake within the district's boundaries. Each district has its own charms. Hoan Kiem is the most interesting district. At its center is Ho Hoan Kiem (Lake of the Restored Sword). To the north and west of the lake is Hanoi's old quarter with its narrow cobblestone streets. Home to numerous guesthouses, mini-hotels, art galleries, restaurants and shops, the old quarter is worth a day of wandering and discovery. Many visitors, particularly backpackers, choose this area as their base in Hanoi. South and east of the lake, the wide tree-lined boulevards of the old French quarter offer a contrast to the busy old quarter. The French colonial influence, obvious throughout the city, is particularly evident in this area. Many colonial villas are now home to embassies, upscale hotels and restaurants. Hanoi has four distinct seasons. Winters can actually be quite chilly; although snow is foreign to Hanoi residents. Summers are hot and rainy. Probably the best time to visit is spring and fall (www.footprintsvietnam.com).



Interestingly, there are a tremendous number of attractions in Hanoi, ranging from cultural to war-related to the worship of Ho Chi Minh. Hanoi also makes a good base for arranging trips to Ha Long Bay or to the northern mountains. Hanoi is pleasantly compact with the small Hoan Kiem Lake marking the center, the crowded older district to the north and the French-built district to the South (www.itisnet.com).

Some of the prominent places to visit are the Temple of Literature that is site of the oldest university in Vietnam, One Pillar Pagoda, the Old Quarter and Hoan Kiem Lake. Hanoi is also home to a number of museums, including the Vietnamese National History Museum, the National Museum of Ethnology, the National Museum of Fine Arts and the Revolution Museum. The Old Quarter, near the scenic Hoan Kiem Lake, has the original street layout and architecture of the old Hanoi. The area is in general famous for its small artisans and merchants, including many silk shops. Local cuisine specialties as well as several clubs and bars can also be found. A night market in the heart of the district opens for business every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evening with a variety of clothing, souvenirs, and food. West Lake is a popular place for people to hang out. It is the largest lake in Hanoi, and there are many temples to visit in the area. There are small

boats for hire, and a floating restaurant that has been operating for a couple of decades (www.en.wikipedia.org).

4.2.1.1.3. Hue

Hue, known as Thua Thien Hue, was the ancient capital of Vietnam on the northern bank of Perfume River in the 17th century by Nguyen Dynasty. Hue is one of the most popular destinations for visitors to Vietnam. Hue's complex of monuments is listed among the UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. Hue can easily be visited as a day trip from Danang or as an overnight stop on the way to Hanoi or before returning to Saigon. The best time to visit Hue is from May to August, when it tends to be driest season (www.footprintsvietnam.com).

Nowadays, the city, about 660 kilometres from Hanoi, looks more like a massive open-air museum with hundreds of temples, pagodas, palaces and tombs. The historical museum is one of the best in the country. Some parts of the city were badly damaged during the war but there are still many notable structures worth a visit (www.circleofasia.com). On both sides of the Perfume River, this quiet, relaxing and mysterious city is divided between the older fortified Citadel and the new, smaller sprawl that has developed across the river. The new side contains most of the facilities, the hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and banks. People come to Hue to see the old Imperial complex, the Citadel and the Forbidden City, the pagodas, and the many tombs of the emperors that lie a few kilometres south of the city. Each tomb is a walled compound containing temples, palaces, and lakes (www.footprintsvietnam.com). During one-day trip, some must-see places in Hue are the Citadel & Forbidden City, Khai Dinh Emperor's Tomb, Tu Duc Emperor's Tomb and Thien Mu Pagoda. The first is an ancient city; a model of the Forbidden City in Beijing while the last is 19th century 7-story pagoda perched on a hill. The complex consists of three temples and a tower

looking out to Perfume River. It is the oldest pagoda in Hue and built in honour of Nhu Lai Buddha (www.circleofasia.com).



Source: www.footprintsvietnam.com, www.en.wikipedia.org

Interestingly, the Vietnamese regard Hue as the pinnacle of Vietnamese fashion, language and cuisine. The women of Hue, wearing the traditional ao dai and non bai tho, are reputed to be the most beautiful in all of Vietnam. The Hue accent is regarded as the most distinct and pleasing to the ear. The food, including local dishes such as banh khoai, is said to be the tastiest (www.footprintsvietnam.com).

4.2.1.1.4. Hoi An

Hoi An, the fourth largest city in Vietnam, is located approximately 30 kilometres south of Danang in the coastal plain of Quang Nam province. The city was founded at the point where the estuary of the Thu Bon River flows into the East China Sea (www.globalheritagefund.org). Hoi An was Vietnam's important international seaport town from

the 16th century to the late 19th century with merchants from both Asia and Europe trading all sorts of goods from spices to gold. Located on the bank of Thu Bon River 30 kilometres south of Danang, this is a quiet riverside town dotted with temples, shrines and Chinese style tile-roofed wooden houses girding a long narrow road (www.circleofasia.com). Traditional lifestyle and Chinese architecture have remained virtually unspoiled since the 17th century – it is one of Vietnam's four World Heritage sites. Indeed, it is the slow pace of life that makes this charming town worth a visit (www.circleofasia.com).



Source: www.globalheritagefund.org

In the past, Hoi An has been used by the Japanese, Portuguese, Dutch, French and the large remaining Chinese community where all sorts of produce and wares were traded. Remnants of these past traders' influences can still be seen lining the streets of Hoi An. There are nine different types of historical sites in Hoi An with an average age of 200 years. They include private houses, family chapels, community halls, communal houses, temples, pagodas, bridges, wells and tombs. Many of these buildings have been maintained close to their original form, allowing you imagination to recreate a prosperous trading town. The houses are small and colourful with wooden doors and two round "wooden house's eyes" above, window shutters and ornamental furniture (www.footprintsvietnam.com).



Source: www.footprintsvietnam.com

Today, there are more than 450 houses in the historic quarter of Hoi An. The city also boasts 87 pagodas and temples, 24 ancient wells, numerous assembly halls and merchants clubs, and an ancient bridge. The historic quarter of Hoi An is centred around three main streets: Bach Dang, Nguyen Thai Hoc and Tran Phu. The quarter has a distinct Chinese atmosphere with its low, tile-roofed houses and narrow streets. All of the houses were built with rare wood and decorated with lacquered boards and panels engraved with Chinese characters. The Japanese Bridge (*Lai Vien Kieu*), echoing the style of the houses, also has a tiled roof, and is located to the west of Tran Phu Street (www.globalheritagefund.org). Hoi An is full of shops selling artwork, from lifelike memorial family portraits, to stylized images of Hoi An houses and streets. Next door to the art shops are places selling souvenir statues, ceramic plates, and 'antique' bowls. Tourists are often being lured into the markets to buy silk and to have quality garments tailor made. Another noticeable quality of Hoi An is its relative silence. There are few cars and people do not feel the urge to use their horns every two seconds. The streets

are filled with the hum of voices, motorbikes and the shuffling of thongs along the ground. Hoi An is small enough to get around on foot. Visitors will need a set of wheels if they are going to Cua Dai Beach or on a day trip to the Marble Mountains or Danang (www.footprintsvietnam.com).

4.2.1.1.5. Danang - Myson

Danang, originally known as Cua Han, gradually developed into a commercial port replacing Hoi An in the early 18th century, when European shipbuilding was improved and large deep-draught vessels could easily enter Danang Bay. The city was associated with the French colonialists who, after establishing their domination of the whole of Vietnam in 1889, separated Danang from Quang Nam Province and renamed the city Tourane under the control of the Governor General of Indochina. After the defeat of the French in 1954, it was given its present name under the authority of the Saigon government (www.haivenu-vietnam.com).



Source: www.traveltovietnam.com, www.circleofasia.com

Danang is Vietnam's fourth-largest city, situated in the central region. Encircled with world cultural heritage sites in Hue and Hoi An (My Son), Danang is often referred as 'Saigon of the North' because it is the deep-sea port city in the middle of the country that serves as the economic hub between the north and the south. The scenic view of the city's two grandiose bridges, Song Han Bridge and Nguyen Van Troi Bridge, indicates well of the booming economy of this seaside town. Geographically, Danang

marks the end of the tropical zone in the north and offers a pleasant year-round climate. Its town is situated on the west bank of the Han River in parallel with the long, thin seaside land strip on the eastern side. Up in the northern end of the east bank are Tien Sa Port and Monkey Mountain while the northern end of the west bank is the Bay of Danang with Thanh Binh Beach and Nam O Beach embracing the west of the bay. Other major beach attractions include Bac My An Beach or China Beach and My Khe Beach. The sea is good for swimming all year round especially in summer from May to August. Other activities in Danang are fishing, water-skiing and diving and yacht race. Most beaches are easily accessible by means of transport. Apart from beaches, Danang also boasts other kinds of tourist attractions: Danang Cathedral, Caodai Temple, Tam Bao Pagoda, Pho Da Pagoda, Cham Museum, Hai Van Pass and Marble Mountain (www.circleofasia.com)

My Son, one of the main attractions located in Quang Nam province, 69km southwest of Danang, was an imperial city during the Champa dynasty between the 4th and the 12th centuries. (www.traveltovietnam.com). The My Son Sanctuary, which exemplifies the height of Cham architectural achievement, is a large complex of religious monuments originally comprised of more than 70 structures and the ruins of 25 of these structures remain today. The archaeological site represents the longest continuous occupation for religious purposes, not only of the Cham Kingdom, but also within Southeast Asia as a whole. The site was inhabited from the 4th until the 15th century AD, far longer than any of the other Indian-influenced sites in the region including the more famous sites of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Borobudur in Indonesia, Pagan in Myanmar, or Ayutthaya in Thailand. My Son was once a veritable forest of towers, many of which were destroyed by the ravages of time and war. This unique site is now in a state of significant disrepair, urgently requiring conservation efforts. (www.globalheritagefund.org).



Source: www.whc.unesco.org, www.orientalarchitecture.com

The My Son Sanctuary includes temples and towers connected to one other through complicated red brick designs. The main component of the design is the tower, built to reflect the divinity of the king (www.traveltovietnam.com). The builders at My Son did not just borrow, but developed their own indigenous styles. One technological advantage they discovered was a way to "glue" bricks together using a type of tree resin native to central Vietnam. Although the precise method is now lost, it appears that the Champa builders set the resin in place by baking entire monuments in fire for a number of days. Presumably, the monuments were detailed many weeks later after the structures thoroughly cooled. The ruins at My Son represent a series of constructions over a period of many centuries. The monuments bear a strong resemblance to Khmer structures found in present-day Cambodia and eastern Thailand. The cosmopolitan city of My Son did a brisk trade with India to the west and Java to the south. The beauty of My Son would be more complete if not for widespread American bombing during the Vietnam War. Even today, unexploded ordnance continues to pose a problem for archaeologists working in the periphery of the My Son area (www.orientalarchitecture.com).

4.2.1.1.6. Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City, better known by its former name of Saigon, is an industrious and dense metropolis, the largest city in Vietnam and the business capital of the country. With a population of five million, it is crowded, noisy and dirty, yet it is also exciting and historic, the essence of the nation. While Hanoi is the center of government, Ho Chi Minh City is the nation's economic heart (www.vietnamonline.com).

Located on the Saigon River on the edge of the Mekong Delta, Saigon became the capital of the Republic of South Vietnam and was the American headquarters during the Vietnam War. Two years later the Communist north took control of the country, the city's name was changed to Ho Chi Minh City, and recession and poverty ensued. Today, Ho Chi Minh City has a cosmopolitan and energetic atmosphere and actively welcomed the new capitalist principle. The business-minded spirit of the people is much in evidence. Although relatively modern, it has still managed to hold onto its Asian character, and fine restaurants, smart hotels and fashionable bars line the sidewalks crowded with noodle stands, markets and shoeshine boys. The busy of motorbikes and scooters merges with the cries of street vendors and the urgent business of stall owners, selling barbecued dog, writhing snakes and tropical fruits. The sight of a family of four balanced precariously on a scooter, a squealing pig strapped onto the back of a bicycle, bowed heads topped by pointed lampshade-style hats and orange-clothed monks are just some of the vibrant images the city has to offer. Although overshadowed by modern and Asiatic influences, a little of Ho Chi Minh City's French colonial charm still remains, evident in the graceful architecture, wide boulevards, and a sidewalk cafe society. It is not for the attractions that one visits Ho Chi Minh City however, but for the vibrancy of its street life, and its proximity to the Mekong Delta (www.wordtravels.com).



Source: www.wordtravels.com, www.terrageria.com

The best way to see Hoi Chi Minh City is on foot. Many tourists put the former American Embassy at the top of the list of things to see in this city. Beside this attraction, there are many interesting places to visit. For example, War Remnants Museum highlights the horrors of modern combat, and especially portrays the suffering inflicted on the Vietnamese people during the Vietnam War (www.wordtravels.com). Ho Chi Minh City possesses many beautiful pagodas. One of the most interesting is the Nghia An Hoi Quan Pagoda on Nguyen Trai. It is certainly one of the most plentifully decorated. Enormous coils of incense hang from the ceiling, looking like great skeletons of Christmas trees. Stand quietly along the shady wall inside for a few minutes to observe visitors dropping in for a quick prayer. Cho Lon or Ho Chi Minh City's Chinatown is another place to visit. Cho Lon is one of the oldest and most mysterious parts of Saigon (www.vietnamonline.com). Cho Lon means "big market" comprising the Chinese district of Saigon, first settled by the Chinese Hoa merchants at the end of the 18th century, and now home to the biggest ethnic minority community in the country.

The difference in environment is immediately noticeable. The cluster of Chinese-signed streets is a fascinating area of temples, restaurants, exotic stores, medicine shops and markets. There are several temples of interest in Cholon, including the colourful Emperor of Jade Temple, the Quan Am Pagoda with its ornate exterior, Phuoc An Hoi Quan Temple, its roof exquisitely ornamented with dragons and sea monsters, and the Thien Hau Pagoda dedicated to the goddess of the sea (www.wordtravels.com). Far from the center of Ho Chi Minh City, the Cu Chi Tunnels, often combined in the tour package offered to tourists, are part of an extensive network of underground passages, which extend as far as Cambodia. Built by the Viet Kong, the tunnels played a strategic role in the Communists' victory. Since the vast network included hospitals, kitchens, dormitories, weapons factories and even classrooms, thousands of guerillas could move themselves and their weapons undetected for great distances. A section of the tunnels are open to visitors. Another tunnel system at Ben Duoc was constructed just for tourists to crawl around in (www.vietnamonline.com).

4.2.1.1.7. The Mekong Delta

The Mekong Delta is the southernmost region of Vietnam and the rice bowl of the country. This vast delta is formed by the deposition of the multiple tentacles and tributaries of the powerful Mekong River, which has its origin in the Tibetan highland plateau 2,800 miles away. From its source, the river makes its way through China, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam before flowing out into the South China Sea (www.vietscape.com). As the Mekong River periodically floods the plains, traditional transportation along a vast network of canals is by boat. A cruise along these canals with their floating markets always proves to be a fascinating and rewarding experience for all visitors. The main towns of the delta are My Tho, Vinh Long, Can Tho and Chau Doc (www.asiahighlightstravel.com). Can Tho is the capital of the Mekong Delta. (www.worldsurface.com).

The Mekong Delta was an ancient Khmer territory. The area was mostly marshland and forest. When the Nguyen Lords took control of this region, a series of canals were built and a system of transportation was implemented in the network of waterways in the area. The people in this region are made up of Vietnamese and some people of Khmer, Chinese and Cham origin. The people living in the Mekong Delta make their living as farmers and fishermen. Often, they live right on the edge of the rivers or canals on various structures built from whatever materials found. Consequently, the architecture along the delta varies from place to place. Life in the delta is tightly woven with its rivers as daily activities and businesses are conducted on its banks. Markets, stores, ship yards, repair shops are some of the more popular trades (www.vietscape.com).

My Tho is the first city tourists come to. Its proximity to Ho Chi Minh City has made My Tho the most popular destination for day-trippers to the delta looking for a taste of authentic delta life. Visitors can take a sampan along the waterways, visit tropical fruit orchards and try the local delicacy, Elephant's Ear fish. The other popular destination for day-trippers from Ho Chi Minh City is Vinh Long, the islands in the Mekong River rather than the town itself that is the highlight of a trip to Vinh Long. Most of the islands are given over to fruit orchards. Wooden bridges made from the trunks of coconut palms or bamboo often straddles the narrow canals. An early morning visit to nearby Cai Be Floating Market offers great photographic opportunities as all manner of produce is traded from boats. Can Tho is one of the more attractive delta towns. The delta's market, Cai Rang Floating Market, is 6 km from Can Tho and well worth an early morning visit Chau Doc, nestling at the foot of Sam Mountain on the Cambodian border, is the busy little riverside town with distinctive architectures of Cham, Khmer and ethnic Chinese communities around the town. A boat trip on the river is the best way to see the unusual floating fish farms and houses. Off the eastern coast of the delta near Cambodia is the island of Phu Quoc. Phu Quoc is blessed with some beautiful white sandy beaches and clear blue seas. Con Dao is another island off the southern coast of

Vietnam. Con Dao serves as a prison island for political prisoners during the French colonial era. It is also an island of immense natural beauty with forested hills, deserted sandy beaches and extensive coral reefs for excellent diving (www.asiahighlightstravel.com).



Source: www.vietscape.com

4.2.1.1.8. Sapa

Located 38km from Lao Cai City, Sapa is a mountainous district of Lao Cai Province and a former colonial hill station situated in a beautiful valley close to the Chinese border. Sapa, situated 1600 metre above sea level, is a cool and breezy resort town first built by the French as a retreat from the flaming heat of the lowlands. Today, Sapa has been rediscovered as a tourist attraction for visitors who come to trek into the green valley and experience the colourful traditional cultures of various ethnic minorities

groups. Destinations include remote villages, scenic vistas, and even the top of Southeast Asia's highest peak: Fansipan Mountain (www.easia-adventures.com). The average temperature of the area is 15-18°C. It is cool in summer and cold in winter. The best time to witness the scenic beauty of Sapa is in April and May. Before that period, the weather might be cold and foggy; after that period is the rainy season. In April and May, Sapa is blooming with flowers and green pastures (www.relaxindochina.com).



Source: www.terrageria.com

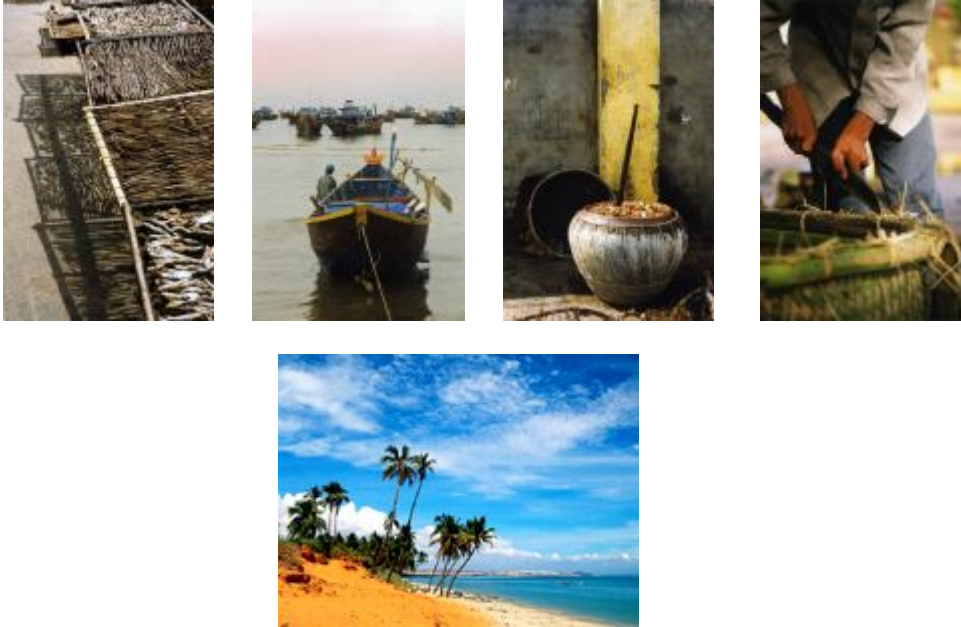
Sapa has many natural sites such as Ham Rong Mountain, Silver Waterfall, Rattan Bridge, Bamboo Forest, Ta Phin Cave, Thac Bac, Thuy Cung Grotto, Gio Cave, Troi Gate, and Truc Forest. Sapa is also the starting point for many climbers and scientists who want to reach the top of Fansipan Mountain, the highest mountain in Vietnam at 3,143 m. Hoang Lien Son Mountains is also called the Alps of the North Sea area since Fansipan Mountain is not only the highest peak in Vietnam, but also in the Indochina Peninsula. The pyramid-shaped mountain is covered with clouds all year round and temperatures often drop below zero, especially at high elevations (www.vietnamsunshinetravel.com). The first thing visitors could notice when approaching the resort town are some separate wooden mansions and villas perched on a hill top or hillside, behind thick pine forests and almost invisible on this foggy morning. Old and new villas with red roofs now appear and now disappear in the green rows of pomu trees, bringing the town the beauty of European towns. Fresh and cool air in Sapa is an idea climate condition for growing temperate vegetables such as cabbage, chayote, precious medicinal herbs, and fruit trees such as plum and pear (www.relaxindochina.com).

Sapa is home to various families of flowers of captivating colours, which can be found nowhere else in the country. When Tet, the Lunar New Year Festival, comes, the whole township of Sapa is filled with the pink colour of peach blossom brought from the vast forests of peach just outside the town. Sapa is regarded as the kingdom of orchids. Here, orchid lovers are even amazed by the choice, when trekking in the forest filled with several hundred kinds of orchids of brilliant colours and fantastic shapes, such as Orchid Princess, Orchid of My Fair Lady's Shoe. Sapa is most beautiful in spring. Apricot, plum and cherry flowers are splendidly beautiful. Markets are crowded and merry, and are especially attractive to visitors. Minority groups come here to exchange and trade goods and products. Visitors to Sapa will have opportunities to discover the unique customs of the local residents (www.relaxindochina.com)

4.2.1.1.9. Phan Thiet

Located in Binh Thuan province, Phan Thiet is 200 km from Ho Chi Minh City and lies south of Cam Ranh Bay on the southernmost stretch of Central Vietnam. Binh Thuan was once a part of the Cham kingdom (www.vietcape.com). Phan Thiet is a small and sleepy seaside town that has a certain quaint and colorful fishing village charm. With a population of just 200,000 people, the town is embraced by a series of rolling hills, lush greenery and a blissfully secluded dune covered coastline. Despite the onset of tourism, the fishing industry is still the main source of income for the locals and many sustain their living from the sea as fishermen or producers of "nuoc nam"- the pungent fish sauce that is so popular with the Vietnamese. The growing number of sophisticated beach resorts seems to have had little impact on Phan Thiet's gentle pace of life - the beaches are particularly quiet and devoid of intrusive vendors (www.traveltovietnam.com).

The attraction of Phan Thiet is the beaches. Although there are not too many to choose from, what are available are quite good, clean and tranquil. About 10 minutes from town is the longest and popular Mui Ne beach. It can be considered as the main tourist area as most of the resorts are located here. Mui Ne is a long, straight and narrow road with resorts by the beach and a handful of restaurants on the other side. The water is not crystal clear but the beach is broad and you can walk for miles on the fine sandy beach fringed by rows of palm trees. As most of the resorts are set apart from each other, peace and privacy are pretty much guaranteed (www.traveltovietnam.com).



Source: www.pbase.com, www.traveltovietnam.com

The Red Sand Dunes in Mui Ne draws a steady stream of curious crowds. The view at the peak is magnificent and the smooth velvety mounds cascade up and down like giant folds of silk fabric. With the shift of winds, the dunes take on a different character at each visit. By day, Phan Thiet town is a vibrant commercial area for the fishing industry. The best time to capture the delights of this little fishing harbor is in the early morning when the entire place has a lively buzz - there are fishes of all shapes and sizes and the local housewives come to bargain for the day's catch. In town, the Thuy Tu Fishermen Association is another good place to see where fishermen come to pay their respect to the Gods of the Sea. This association looks like a Chinese temple and is quite an intriguing place to visit. Over a century ago, whales were frequently spotted in the surrounding coast of Phan Thiet and fishermen believed they were Gods of the Sea who guided and protected them. When a whale died, their remains were brought back and buried in the grounds of the association. After 3 years the bones were placed in a pagoda for worship. Inside the association, different rooms store tons of whalebones,

some over 100 years old. On display is the preserved bone structure of an enormous fin whale that is over 120 years old, 22 meters long and weighs over 65 tons. This ritual is still practiced today and the last whale burial was in 2002(www.asiahotels.com). In addition, visitors could visit Co Thach pagoda. The pagoda is located on the beach of Binh Thanh village in Tuy Phong district about 105km of Phan Thiet city. In the middle of the 19th century, Buddhist monk Bao Tang built this pagoda in a large cave .The path and stairs that lead up to the pagoda are made of stone, and the two sides of the balcony are decorated with dragons. On the small rock mountain by the sea is a statue of Bodhisttava Avalokitesvara, and the pagoda contains a statue of Sakyamuni Buddha. Next to the pagoda is the Ca Duoc multicolored rocky expanse that stretches for nearly 1km along the coast. Recently a new Co Thach tourism village was constructed with many attractive stilt-houses available to both pilgrims and to those who come to enjoy the beautiful landscape (www.traveltovietnam.com).

4.2.1.1.10. Nha Trang

Like Danang, Nha Trang, 445 kilometres northeast of Ho Chi Minh City, is a city mainly renowned for it's non-Vietnamese past as it was an important town in the Kingdom of Champa. After armies of the Vietnamese Le Dynasty had invaded the northern regions of the Kingdom of Champa in 1471, the Chams retreated to a small area around Nha Trang. In 1720, when another Vietnamese attack was imminent, the entire Cham nation migrated to the Southwest into an area north of Tonle Sap Lake in present-day Cambodia (www.asiatour.com). Ethnic minorities in Nha Trang include the Ede, the Cham and the Raglai (www.vietnamopentour.com).



Source: www.terrageria.com

Nha Trang has developed into Viet Nam's best seaside resort. It has long been known to have the best weather in Viet Nam (www.pattayacity.com). Yet, with a population of 300,000, Nha Trang still retains its small town atmosphere. This resort town is well known for its miles of beach and the friendliness of its people. The city is flanked by nearly ten kilometres of prime beach where the water is warm year round. The average temperature in Nha Trang is 26 C. Nha Trang also has the lowest level of humidity in all of Vietnam. Today, Nha Trang ranks among the top of all beaches in Vietnam. Nha Trang is 1,287 km south of Hanoi, 624 km south of Hue and 442 km from Ho Chi Minh City. Nha Trang has several famous islands. Most notable are Hon Tre, Hon Yen, Hon Rua and the islands (www.vietscape.com) 50 kilometres south of Nha Trang, Cam Ranh Bay is one of the largest natural harbours of the world. During the Vietnam War, Cam Ranh Bay had been one of the most important Southeast Asian harbours for the American forces (www.asiatour.com).

From Ho Chi Minh City going northeast on highway 1 to Nha Trang, the road is extremely energetic. The trip will take between 9-10 hours. On the way, the two major cities are Phan Rang and Phan Thiet. Both cities are small in size. However, Phan Thiet is very famous for its nuoc nam - fish sauce industry. The next famous site before reaching Nha Trang is Cana beach. This stretch of beautiful white sand is a beautiful beach with a few restaurants. It is a popular rest area for travelers coming from the South. There are many Thanh Long (Green Dragon fruit) orchards along the highway leading to Nha Trang. This fruit is known to grow only in this region and has become popular only in recent years.

Upon arriving to Nha Trang, most tourists will pass through downtown. Beyond the rows of businesses and homes will be Nha Trang beach, the finest city beach in Vietnam. Other highlights of Nha Trang include the Po Nagar Cham towers, Tam Island, Long Son Pagoda, Hon Chong, Cau Da, Hon Yen and Nha Trang Cathedral. The partially well preserved temple complex of Cham Ponagar is the most important historical attraction of Nha Trang. The complex is situated on a hill outside Nha Trang. Originally the complex included 8 towers, 4 of which still stand. They were constructed in different styles. Therefore it is assumed that they were built at different times between the 7th and the 12th century. The highest tower (23 metres) was built in honor of Princess Ponagar who had taught weaving and new agricultural technologies to the people of the region. The other towers are dedicated to deities (www.asiatour.com).

Tam Island is located in Vinh Nguyen Ward, to the South of Nha Trang Bay, 3 nautical miles from Nha Trang Port, Khanh Hoa Province. Hon Tam is well known by the wild tropical forest, long beach and clear water. Around the rock range, thousands kind of fish and colorful corals make tourists exciting and peaceful. Therefore, Hon Tam Resort is a wonderful spot of recreation and health improvement. Perhaps the most impressive sight in Nha Trang, aside from the beach and Cham towers, is Long Son Pagoda, also known as Tinh Hoi Khanh Hoa Pagoda and An Nam Phat Hoc Hoi Pagoda. It's about 500m west of the train station. The Pagoda was first built on Mount Trai Thuy in

1886 and named Dang Long Pagoda. In 1900, the Pagoda was damaged in a storm and was rebuilt down the mountain in its present location (www.waytovietnam.com).

4.2.1.1.11. Phu Quoc Island

Phu Quoc, Vietnam's largest teardrop island is a part of Kien Giang province and the Mekong Delta in the south-western part of Vietnam about 280 km from Ho Chi Minh City. It is situated in the gulf of Thailand bordering Cambodia and surrounded by hundreds of islets (www.circleofasia.com). The island is 48 km in length, and 28 km across and has approximately 60,000 inhabitants living on it. Half of the island remains forested and the beaches deserted and unspoilt (www.maekong-travel.com). Virtually unknown to the tourist world, the island's visitors are mostly locals and some foreign travelers. There are a few 3 star resorts and guesthouses on the island. The island is accessible by plane for a one-hour flight from Ho Chi Minh City. Alternatively, travelers can reach the island by public boats from various points such as An Thoi, Rach Gia and between An Thoi and Ha Tien. The trip takes between four and six hours. The best time for these boat trips happens from late October to late September when the sea is calm (www.circleofasia.com).

Phu Quoc, with a land area of 1,320km of the best beaches in Vietnam, a large forest area, and coral around the small islands to the south, is part of an archipelago of 105 islands in the Gulf of Thailand, of which 13 are in close proximity to its makes it Vietnam's largest island. It has someshores. About fifty percents of the island are covered in forests and flanked by unspoiled sandy beaches. Although comparatively underdeveloped, the island is becoming a tourist attraction. The northeast corner of the island is hilly and covered in dense forest. It was originally designated as a nature reserve in 1993. Although it was upgraded to National Park status in 2001 and extended to cover most of the island, little is known about its bio-diversity. The islands and their

surrounding marine areas are currently being considered for 'biosphere' listing by UNESCO (www.haivenu-vietnam.com).



Source: www.vietnamsunshinetravel.com, www.relaxindochina.com
www.journals.worldnomads.com

Phu Quoc is called the island of "99 mountains" or the Emerald Island because of its natural treasures and infinite tourism potential (www.footprintsvietnam.com). Phu Quoc's beaches are by far the main reason for the growing interest in Phu Quoc as a major tourist destination. They are considered the best in Vietnam – experienced travelers have described some of them as the best they have ever seen (www.haivenu-vietnam.com). Kem Beach is the most beautiful beach in Phu Quoc. The white powdery sandy beach is located in the southern part about 25 km from Duong Dong and 5 km from the airport. In addition to beaches, other interesting places in the island are the Temple and Tomb of national hero Nguyen Trung Truc in Rach Gia, Mac Cuu Tomb, the Bird Sanctuary, a mangrove forest, Tam Bao Pagoda and Tan Hoi Pagoda. Activities on and off the island include snorkeling, scuba diving, trekking and fishing. Most of tourist activities take place in Duong Dong, which is the center of the island. Tourist attractions,

a fishing port, Phu Quoc Airport and most of the resorts are located here (www.circleofasia.com). Virtually unknown to the tourist world, the island's visitors are mostly locals and some foreign travelers. There are a few 3 star resorts and guesthouses on the island. The island is accessible by plane for a one-hour flight from Ho Chi Minh City. Alternatively, travelers can reach the island by public boats from various points such as An Thoi, Rach Gia and between An Thoi and Ha Tien. The trip takes between four and six hours. The best time for these boat trips happens from late October to late September when the sea is calm (www.circleofasia.com).

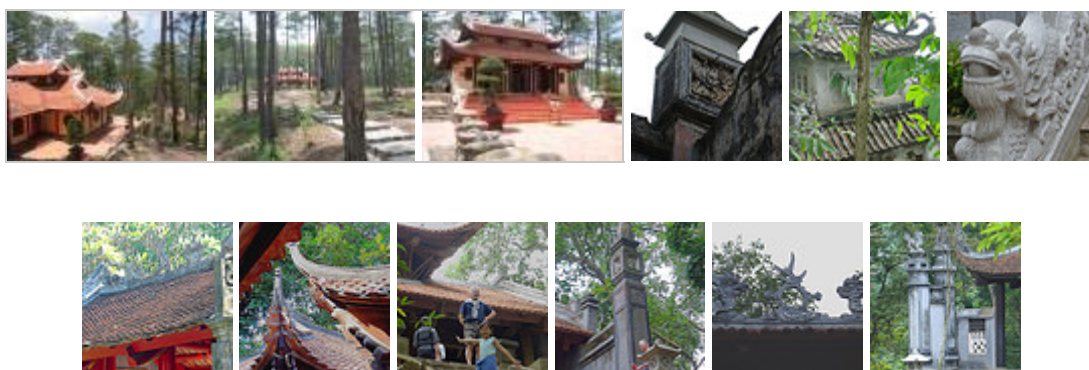
4.2.1.1.12. Den Hung

Den Hung or Kings Hung Temple is one of the major attractions in Phu Tho. Phu Tho is located in the Plains and Midland in the North of Vietnam and shares border with Tuyen Quang, Yen Bai provinces on the north, Vinh Phuc, Ha Tay provinces on the east, Son La Province on the west and Hoa Binh Province on the south. The terrain is mainly made up by hills. There are also three big rivers namely Red, Da and Lo rivers running through Phu Tho. Phu Tho has a monsoon tropical climate with a cold winter and hot summer, annual average temperature of 23°C, annual average rainfall of 1600-1800mm and annual average humidity of 85-87% (www.vietnamtourism.com).

Phu Tho is considered as ancestral land of Vietnam. Den Hung (Hung Temple) Remains is tied to the legend about 18 kings Hung who built Van Lang State, the first one of Vietnam, with Phong Chau as the capital. Phu Tho has bright culture. Archaeological sites like Son Vi, Dong Dau, Lang Ca and many pagodas, temples, tombs around Nghia Linh Mountain prove that Phong Chau used to be cultural centre of ancient Vietnamese. Phu Tho is home of many festivals including Bach Hac, Chu Hoa, and most honourable one is Den Hung Festival. This festival is on 10th day of the 3rd lunar month annually corresponding to the anniversary of the Kings Hung. Now, it

becomes a great ceremonial festival of the Vietnamese nation (www.vietnamtourism.com).

Hung temple (Den Hung), located on Nghia Linh Mountain, 175 meters by sea level, Viet Tri City, Phu Tho Province, is a beautiful landscape - the national historical vestige where Vietnamese memorizes Hung King because of their contribution to country 4000 years ago. Hung Kings Temple is a complex of majestic buildings that consist of Ha Temple and Thien Quang Pagoda, Gieng Temple, Trung and Thuong temples, and King Hung Tomb (www.vietnamtourism.com).



Source: www.flickr.com, www.travel.webshots.com

Ha Temple: 225 brick steps lie between Dai Mon Gate and Ha Temple, which was built in the 15th century. According to the legend, in this place, Au Co gave birth to a pouch containing 100 eggs, which later hatched to become 100 children. Her husband, Lac Long Quan, led 50 children down to the coastal region to populate the land and propagate the race. Au Co brought 49 children up to the mountainous area. The eldest child, Hung Vuong, was left to become King; he founded the capital in Phong Chau and named the country Van Lang. In front of the Ha Temple, there is a 700-year-old tree. It is in this temple where late President Ho Chi Minh had a talk with the soldiers on their way to Hanoi in 1954. He told them "The Hung Kings had the merit of founding the country. You and I must stick together to safeguard it. Trung Temple: Over 168 brick

steps must then be climbed to get to Trung Temple. According to legends, the Kings Hung built the house as a place to rest and hold political meetings. It is also where Prince Lang Lieu presented sticky rice cakes to his father the King on the occasion of Tet Holiday.

Thuong Temple: Over 102 brick steps from Trung Temple to get to Thuong Temple, where exclusively used for the kings to have offerings to the Sun God, the Earth God, the Rice God, and Saint Dong, a legendary hero, defeated the An invaders of the ancient Chinese Dynasty. This is also the place where King Hung, the 18th, abdicated in favour of Thuc Phan, who erected a stone pillar and swore to take care of the temple and of the Hung family's inheritance.

King Hung Tomb: It was the tomb of the 6th King Hung. Legend has it that, after defeating the An invaders, the 6th King Hung took off his clothes and left it on the branch of the kim giao tree and died on the spot.

Gieng Temple (Well Temple): At the foot of the mountain is the Gieng Temple, where worshipped Ngoc Hoa and Tien Dung, the 18th Hung King's daughters. It is said that the two princesses used to comb their hair and look at themselves in the water of this well.

Nowadays, the nearby public reception house, Cong Quan, houses the Kings Hung Museum, built to present numerous artefacts from the dawn of the nation when the Kings Hung founded and ruled the country.

4.2.1.1.13. Thien Cam

Thien Cam Beach is situated approximately 20 km from Ha Tinh, in Ha Tinh province. Ha Tinh is located on the Northern Central of Vietnam, surrounded by Nghe An Province on the north, Quang Binh Province on the south, Laos on the west, and East Sea on the east. Mountainous terrain accounts for 80% of the province's natural area that is sharply differentiated and divided, forming deferent ecological areas. There are

14 rivers such as Ngan Pho, Ngan Sau, and Cay. The coastline is 137km in length, which is suitable for making salt, rearing shellfish such as shrimps, crabs, oysters and snails. The province has many special internal tourism places ecologically, historically, culturally, namely National Park of Vu Quang, Ke Go reservoir, Hong Linh Mountain, interests inhering to poet Nguyen Du, monument of comrade Tran Phu - First General Secretary of Vietnamese Communist Party, Dong Loc Road Junction - a monument sticking with glorious victory of Vietnam against the US. Then, tourists are able to relax in Xuan Thanh, Thien Cam, Thach Hai or Deo Con beaches, or in medical treatment area of Son Kim Hot Spring (www.sinhcafe.com.vn).



Source: www.vietnamtourism.com

The low mountains in proximity to the sea have created a beautiful landscape of Thien Cam Beach. Separated from the mountain foot by a sandbank, Yen Lac Pagoda, built during the 13th century, is a relic preserved by the government. A famous set of paintings called "the King of Hell's Ten Palaces" has been kept in the pagoda since the beginning of the 20th century. The French built Thien Cam as a resort, but nearly all the infrastructures were destroyed during the wars. Nowadays, Thien Cam Beach has become a tourist site where many come to vacation (www.benthanhtravel.com).

4.2.1.2. Attractions related to the minor promotional theme of historic and cultural tourism

According to the interviews, the fashionable attraction related to the minor promotional theme of historic and cultural tourism that is often currently included in the tour packages is the Tay Nguyen Central Highland. In addition, Dien Bien Phu and Quang Tri also have potential to be promoted in the future to serve the natural and cultural tourism.

4.2.1.2.1. The Tay Nguyen Central Highlands

This zone is located to the west of the south central coast provinces. Behind these huge mountains is a vast area of red soil known locally as "Tay Nguyen" (the Central Highlands). There are numerous legendary accounts of the flora and fauna and of the lives of several different ethnic minorities living in the Central Highlands. This area covers five provinces including Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong and Lam Dong. Dalat, established during the 19th century, is a popular resort town in this part of Vietnam (www.acjc.edu.sg).

Kon Tum province lies in Central Tay Nguyen Highlands and shares a border with Laos. Kon Tum is the largest plateau on the central Highlands. It is more than 800 meters above sea level. The majority of the local inhabitants are made up the Ba Na, one of the several ethnic minority groups in the Central Highlands. The second largest group is the Kinh, which is followed by the Gia Rai people. The provincial capital of Kon Tum is the townships of the same name, which is located on the northern part of Central Highlands. The town is situated on the riverbank of the Dac Pla River; a tributary of the town is in a small flat land area, which is just 525 meters above sea level.

Ethnic minorities make up 51% population of Kontum. Most of them are Ba Na, Xo Dang, Gie Trieng, Gia Rai, B'Rau, and Ro Man. They work on fields in the mountains. Kontum has colorful, diversified culture of ethnic groups. Their customs are

unique with special traditional festivals like cong chieng (gongs), buffalo stabling, leaving- the- tomb, new rice festivals. Over the years, gongs have become a typical cultural characteristic, unique and attractive of the Central Highlands. In 2005, UNESCO officially recognized the Space of Gong Culture in Vietnam's Central Highlands as "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" (www.waytovietnam.com). The major attractions in Kon Tum comprise Ba Na Village, Tay Nguyen Grave Rituals and Communal house.



Source: www.perfectour.com.vn.

Ba Na Kon Tum is the name of a tribal group of the Ba Na people most of who live in the Ba Na language, Kon means village and Tum means pond or lake. Ba Na Kon Tum literally means Ba Na village, which has many ponds and lakes. Visitors to a Ba Na village are to see beautiful wooden houses on stilt, which have different shapes and sizes. They are either quadrilateral or square. The staircase leading to a house is made of a tree trunk. Each of the steps is meticulously chiselled, which reflects the carving skills of Ba Na men. The Ba Na people are the first among the ethnic minority groups in the Central Highlands to own written language and how to use buffaloes and cows to plough their fields. The Ba Na people are famous for their hunting skill. Visitors to any houses can see there are several wooden bows and pots of arrows hang on the wall. Like any other ethnic minority peoples on the Central Highlands the Ba Na people always keep a big fire in the middle of their houses. The fire that is always kept alive is

where family members and friends sit around to have drink, food and talks. The fire also keeps warm for those who sleep around it at cold nights (www.perfectour.com.vn).

According to ancient customs of the people of ethnic minority groups in the Central Highlands, the deceased are preserved in grave-houses. The hut is usually stocked with personal belongings of the dead. Two or three years afterwards, family members remove the hut and built a new, larger wooden house. The grave-house is surrounded with a fence, and at the front is a wooden statue in the likeness of a human, bird or animal. The practice of removing the makeshift hut, a ritual called *le bo ma*, is usually organized in the spring and is considered a festive day. Villagers gather at the cemetery grounds and the family members bring food offerings. After the offerings are given to the deceased, villagers sing songs, dance and enjoy the food and drink taken down from the altar. They have the belief that the deceased return to join the feast with the living (www.perfectour.com.vn).



Source: www.perfectour.com.vn.

Communal house is a large, imposing, beautifully decorated stilt house built in the middle of the village. It is where community activities take place, reception of guests, meetings, wedding ceremonies, or praying ceremonies. It is also the place for reception of guests. The Rong House of each ethnic group has its own architectural style, design, and décor. Yet there are shared features. In the village, it is often the biggest house roofed with yellow-dried giant leaves and having 8 big wood columns. The rafters are decorated with patterns of bright colours, depicting religious scenes, legendary stories

about ancient heroes, stylized animals, and other familiar things of the village life.

The most salient feature of the décor of the Rong House is the image of the brilliant God of Sun. The Rong House is a symbol of the culture of Central Highlanders, an age-old and stable culture. The bigger the house, the wealthier the village is. It is a pride of the whole village (www.perfectour.com.vn).

Gia Lai is located in the Central Highlands. It shares the border with Kon Tum Province on the north, Dak Lak Province on the south, Cambodia on the west, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen provinces on the east. Lai is source of Ba and Se San rivers with Yaly hydroelectricity plant. It owns many springs, lakes, waterfalls, rives, and primary forest. Coming to Gia Lai, visitors have a change to discover many impressive, poetic scenes. They are Kon Ka Kinh, Kon Cha Rang tropical forests, Xung Khoeng Waterfall, Phu Cuong Waterfall, Da Trang, Mo springs and Ayaun Ha Lake. Located on the top of an extinct volcano, Bien Ho (To Nung Lake) is called the “Pearl of Pleiku”. Its water is so clear that visitors can see fish swimming under blue water. The province is also proud of funeral houses, La Phum, D’ko Tu traditional villages with special Rong house. Whenever going to this windy and sunny land, visitors are likely to see the unique architectural style of the statues in funeral houses, and to investigate the local customs and practice mysterious to them.



Source: www.sinhcafe.com.vn

Apart of that, tens of thousands of visitors are attracted to Dong Xanh Cultural Park in which many typical varieties of flowers and trees of Central Highlands are planted. Gia Lai has historic sites such as King Quang Trung's guerrilla base, Nup hero's homeland, Pleiku Prison, Pleime, Cheo Leo, and La Rang battlefields. Gia Lai has long history and old ethnic culture, mainly Gia Lai and Ba Na ethnics. The unique character stamps of rong house, house on stilts, tomb-house statue architectural styles, traditional festivals, customs and musical instruments. In attractive events like Po Thi (leaving-the-tomb) ceremony, buffalo stabbing festival, xoang dance...the ethnic groups show their customs with colourful, mystical pattern, perform many traditional dances and uniquely musical instruments (horn, gong lu, gongs...) (www.sinhcafe.com.vn).



Source: www.vietnam.sawadee.com.

Dac Lac, the largest province in Tay Nguyen Highlands, is located southeast of the Truong Son Mountains and shares a 240 km border with Cambodia. Though the population of Dac Lac is not large, it includes several different ethnic minorities such as Kinh, E De, Gia Rai, and M'ong. Dac Lac has many beautiful lakes such as Ea Kao, Eas No, Eo Don. Lac Lake is where the M'ong minority has been living for many generations. Dac Lac's historical vestiges include Buon Ma Thuot Prison, Dak Tua underground tunnels, and Bao Dai King's building. Daclac province is located in the Dac Lac plateau, one of the three large plateaus in the central Highlands. Dac Lac plateau, 600 meters above sea level, is blessed with basaltic soil. The southern part of the province is lower and has several bodies of water. Buon Ma Thuot, which is 536 meters above sea level, is the provincial capital of Dac Lac. It is situated in the middle of the largest settlement on the Central Highlands. The majority of the local inhabitants are the E De people, one of the several groups of ethnic minority on the Central Highlands. The peculiar trait of the city is that there are many town houses made of wood in the inner city while many other houses in the suburbs are those on stilt. Fruit gardens, rubber plantations, coffee gardens, and vegetables also surround the city. Buon Ma Thuot is 1,399km south of Hanoi (www.vietnam.sawadee.com).

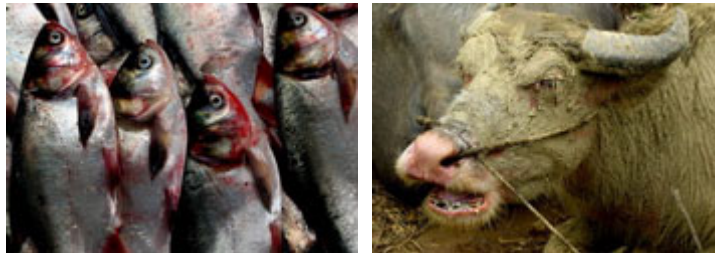


Lam Dong is a mountainous province, and 70% of its area is covered in forest. To the north, it borders on Dak Lak and Dak Nong provinces, to the southeast, on Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces, and to the west, on Binh Phuoc and Dong Nai provinces. The remarkable characteristic of Lam Dong's topography is the fairly distinctive division of tiers from north to south. The north of the province is the area of high mountains, the Lang Bian plateau, with summits of altitudes between 1,300m – above 2,000m such as Bidoup (2,287m), Lang Bian (2,167m). The east and the west are mountains with modest altitudes (500m – 1,000m). The south is topographically the transition from the Di Linh – Bao Loc plateau to the semi-flat country. The unique tourism of Lam Dong Province is made from the combination of topographical, climatic and hydrographical factors. Together with its forests and regional flora and fauna, Lam Dong offers distinctive scenery with many picturesque lakes, falls, hills and pine forests. Some of the natural scenic spots include Xuan Huong Lake, Dan Kia – Suoi Vang Lake, Tuyen Lam Lake, Lake of Sighs, Valley of Love, Da Nhim Lake, Camly Falls, Datanla Falls, Prenn Falls, Pongour Falls, Dambri Falls, Bobla Falls, Liliang Falls, Voi (Elephant) Falls, Ponguar Falls, Golf Hills, Lang Bian Mountain, etc. Places of historical and cultural interest include some French – style palaces, Linh Son Pagoda, Linh Phong Pagoda, Truc Lam Zen Monastery, Dalat Cathedral, Cat Tien archaeological site (www.sinhcafe.com.vn).

4.2.1.2.2. Dien Bien Phu

The Battle of Dien Bien Phu is a well-known historical event symbolizing the glorious victory of the Vietnamese people and army. It took place on the west side of Dien Bien district, in Lai Chau province, 500-km northwest of Hanoi. Lai Chau is located in northwest Vietnam and shares borders with China, Laos, and Lao Cai and Son La. The population consists mainly of the Thai, Si La, and La Chi minority groups. Lai Chau's historical vestiges are known worldwide as the site of the victory of the Vietnamese Army at Dien Bien Phu over the French enemy in 1954. Besides, this is where various minority people first settled down.

Dien Bien Phu is surrounded by mountains and lies in the Muong Thanh valley, a 20-km-long and 6-km-wide heart-shaped basin. The Nam Rom River runs across the valley. Dien Bien Phu valley is fertile due to the Nam Rom River. After 1953, French expeditionary corps occupied Dien Bien Phu and set up a group of fortresses equipped with many state-of-the-art weapons. Dien Bien Phu victory created a great echo in the world. The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people's army against the French expeditionary corps in 1954 lasted 56 days. General de Castries and his entire command were taken alive and 16,000 enemy troops were put out of action. The relics of the Battle of Dien Bien Phu include Doc Lap Hill, the airport, and the command tunnel of General de Castries (www.vietnamopentour.com).



Source: www.footprintsvietnam.com

The hilltribes living around the area of Dien Bien Phu make up 70% of the regions population, and the ethnic minority groups include the Black Thai, Nung, Meo, Loa and others (www.footprintsvietnam.com). Pa Khoang Lake is actually a man-made water reservoir, crucial for the irrigation of the valley below. It is also the site of Dien Bien Phu's only tourist resort - a newly built hotel that resembles a Swiss castle (www.vietnam.sawadee.com). On weekends, the 21 km road from Pa Khoang Lake to Dien Bien Phu is busy, as the town's residents flock here for day trips. The resort is a sign of things to come as Dien Bien Phu's history continues to draw tourists. Unlike many of the tourists who come here, Dien Bien Phu's residents are not looking back. The town is

alive with color, as the Vietnamese, Thai and H'mong residents go about their daily affairs like carrying their wares into town, shopping in the crowded market, and holding xoe dancing parties in their stilt houses. These people, whose cultures are as different as their clothing styles, share the same warmth and hospitality for visitors. Dien Bien Phu is a historic site and the natural scenery is stunning. But it is the town's forward-looking people who make a trip to Dien Bien Phu truly memorable (www.vietnam.sawadee.com).

4.2.1.2.3. Quang Tri

Quang Tri, city in central Vietnam, the major city of Quang Tri Province. Quang Tri lies near the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), an area that separated North and South Vietnam after Vietnam was partitioned at the end of the First Indochina War in 1954. The DMZ was intended to be an area free of arms (www.greatestcities.com). Quang Tri is located near the crossways between North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Several different minorities populate this province (Kinh, Bru-Van Kieu). Famous sites in Quang Tri include Quang Tri Citadel and the holy land of La Vang. Violent battles took place in Quang Tri during the war against the Americans; such battles have left revolutionary vestiges such as Hien Luong Bridge, Tung Gate, and Vinh Moc underground tunnels (www.vietnam.sawasdee.com).

The Quang Tri ancient citadel was built in 1824 by the order of King Minh Mang. It is located in Thach Han village, Hai Lang district; initially the citadel was a work of earth. Four years later it was rebuilt with bricks. In 1972 during the phasing out of the American intervention in the Vietnam War, the liberation army seized the citadel from the Sai Gon troops. The stationing liberation troops had to suffer the heaviest and longest artillery and bombing attacks ever launched by the Saigon army to recapture the citadel. The citadel located in an enclosed area of about two square kilometres had to endure the velocity of bombing and artillery explosion which was equal to eight times the velocity of the atomic bomb dropped by the US in Hiroshima in Japan in 1954. At

present visitors to the site of the ancient Quang Tri Citadel can still see several pieces of brick wall of the citadel. They are all what have been left after the 36-day battle back in 1972. One can imagine these standing brick walls as some sort of war memorials to those fallen combatants in the fight at the Quang Tri citadel.



Truong Son Cemetery was built on several low-lying hills in Truong Son village, Gio Linh district. In the cemetery there are a big war memorial, a steal house and a group of statuettes, as high as 10 meters, depicting those fallen combatants who had sacrificed their lives for national liberation and independence. The big steal bears an inscription highly evaluating the sacrifices and merits contributed to the national liberation war by those soldiers who had kept the Ho Chi Minh Trail connected all the time for the continuation of material and man power supply from the north to the battlefields in the south.



Ben Hai River also has another name: Rao Thanh River. The upper reach of the river is on a stretch of 100 kilometres to meet the sea at Cua Tung (Tung River mouth). The widest part of the river is about 200 meters. The portion where the Hien Luong Bridge spans across is about 170 meters. French sappers first built Hien Luong steel Bridge in 1950. Earlier the only means of transport across the river was by boat. The bridge was 178 meters long and had seven girders. The bridge surface was paved with wood planks.

Under the Geneva Agreement on Vietnam signed in 1954 Ben Hai River on the 17th parallel has been selected as a temporary demarcation line separating the country regrouping purposes. The DMZ area had Hien Luong Bridge divided into two parts, which served as the border gates to both sides. Nowadays Hien Luong Bridge has become a historic landmark and a great tourist attraction. The existence of the bridge reflects the miraculous strength of the Vietnamese people throughout the course of the 20-year-long resistance war national independence, freedom and rail independence, freedom and reunification of the entire Vietnam.

Vinh Moc Tunnels, in Quang Tri province, was where the first US bombs were dropped in North Vietnam. In June 1965, after heavy bombardments, Vinh Moc villagers started digging shelters beneath their houses and then joined with the neighbours to create a web of tunnels. Every household was entitled to 4 m². Households were connected to public facilities, such as meeting rooms, art performance room, and a clinic where 17 babies were born (www.vietnam.sawasdee.com).

4.2.2. Opinion on the image positioning of Cambodia tourism

In regard to the feature of image positioning of Cambodia tourism, there are as expected similarities in expressed opinions among respondents. The respondents strongly agree that the existing image position of tourism in Cambodia is similar to the ASEAN neighbouring countries.

The respondents furthermore discussed and shared their own opinions on the elements or aspects could be used as a symbol to promote tourism in Cambodia. As can be seen from the results of study, all respondents do believe that cultural and heritage prosperity could be used as a symbol for promoting Cambodia tourism at the highest level, followed by the beauty of nature at a high level. Subsequently, the image of the special interest tourism seems to be crucially preserved as a dominant scene for tourism development in Cambodia due to the legacy of Angkor Wat.

According to the discussion, the respective respondents highly supported that the cultural and heritage tourism is the most appropriate promotional theme of tourism products in Cambodia. Additionally, the same respondents stated that the natural and cultural tourism activity could also be used as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to this country while health tourism, sport and recreational tourism and shopping tourism gain the low interests to be used as a positioning statement. Eco-tourism and soft adventure fairly attract and challenge visitors who visit this country.

Based on the above-recommended promotional themes, Cambodia has offered an array of choices of attractions that provide opportunity for the cultural and heritage tourism and the natural and cultural tourism. With respect to such major and minor promotional themes of tourism products, the fashionable presented attractions and the new attractions, which have potential in being developed for tourism to serve up such themes, are listed in Table 2.15.

Table 2.15: Promotional themes of tourism products and related attractions in Cambodia

	The Major Promotional Theme (Cultural and heritage tourism)	The Minor Promotional Theme (Natural and cultural tourism)
The presented attractions	Siem Reap Angkor Wat Preah Vihear Sombo Preay Kuh Phnom Penh and surroundings	North-eastern Cambodia Sihanouk Ville Kampot Kep Koh Kong
The new attractions	Koh Ker Phnom Da Boeng Melea Banteay Chhama	Tonle Sap Lake, Siem Reap Kampong Thom Kampong Chhanang Posat Battambang

4.2.2.1. Attractions related to the major promotional theme of cultural and heritage tourism

There are a bundle of pristine attractions that have yet to be developed and promoted in Cambodia. These places possess high potential of unique natural attractions, biodiversity and well associated with culture for the development as tourist attractions in the future, for instance, extensive mostly undeveloped white sandy beaches on the mainland and offshore islands in the southern coastal areas of Cambodia. Cambodia holds a specific characteristic based on its resources and market image. Though people well recognize this country from the glorious world heritage site

of Angkor Wat, the country alternatively offers attractions to visit ranging from 29 historical attractions, 6 archaeological sites, 6 natural attractions and specific topography of Great Lake and the Mekong River. All these 41 tourists attractions are mainly located in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Kampong Thom. According to the interviews, the presented attractions related to the major promotional theme of cultural and heritage tourism that are currently fashionably included in the tour packages are Siem Reap Angkor Wat, Preah Vihear, Sombo Preay Kuh and Phnom Penh and surroundings. In addition, the Cambodian government will expand tourism development to the cultural and heritage sites of Koh Ker, Phnom Da, Boeng Melea and Banteay Chhama.

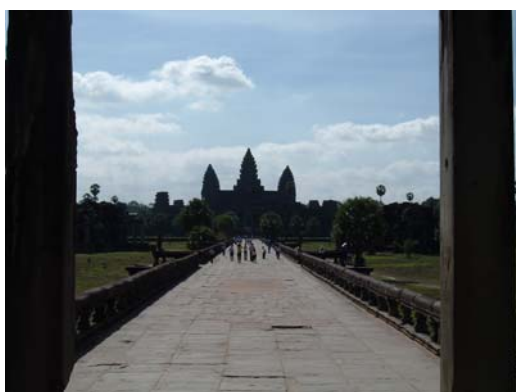
4.2.2.1.1. Siem Reap Angkor Wat

Nestled between rice paddies and stretched along the Siem Reap River, the small provincial capital of Siem Reap Town serves as the gateway to the millennium-old temple ruins of the Khmer Empire. Designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, the Angkor Archaeological Park encompasses dozens of temple ruins including Bayon, Banteay Srey and the legendary Angkor Wat (www.canbypublications.com).

Siem Reap is the capital of Siem Reap Province, Cambodia. Siem Reap has colonial and Chinese-style architecture in the Old French Quarter, and around the Old Market. The main town is concentrated around Sivutha Street and the Psar Chas area (Old Market area) where old colonial buildings, shopping and commercial districts are located. The Wat Bo area is now full of guesthouses and restaurants while the Psar Leu area is often crowded with local commerce. Other fast developing areas are the airport road and main road to Angkor where a number of large upscale hotels and resorts can be found (www.wikipedia.org/wiki). Nowadays, Siem Reap offers a wide range of hotels, restaurants, pubs and shops including several upscale hotels and dozens of budget guesthouses. There are many opportunities to experience traditional Cambodia

including Apsara's dance performances, craft shops and silk farms, road tours through rice-paddy countryside, boat trips on the great Tonle Sap Lake to fishing villages and bird sanctuary (www.canbypublications.com).

Angkor Wat is approximately six kilometres from the town centre and the temple closest to Siem Reap. The temple park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site officially designated as the Angkor Archaeological Park (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki). Angkor Wat is a massive three-tiered pyramid crowned by five beehive-like towers rising 65 meters from ground level and is the centrepiece of any visit to the temples of Angkor. At the apex of Khmer political and military dominance in the region, Suryavarman II constructed Angkor Wat in the form of a massive temple-mountain' dedicated to the Hindu god, Vishnu. It served as his state temple, though the temple's uncommon westward orientation has led some to suggest that it was constructed as Suryavarman II's funerary temple. This is still a matter of debate. Other temples of the same and style period include Thommanon, Banteay Samre, Wet Atwea and Beng Melee, which may have served as a prototype to Angkor Wat. A moat and an exterior wall measuring 1300 meters x 1500 meters surrounded Angkor Wat. The temple itself is 1 km square and consists of three levels surmounted by a central tower. The walls of the temple are covered inside and out with has-reliefs and carvings. Nearly 2000 distinctively rendered Apsara carvings adorn the walls throughout the temple and represent some of the finest examples of apsara carvings in Angkorian era art (www.angkorholiday.com).





Bayon Angkor Thom (Big Angkor) is a 3km walled royal city and was the last capital of the Angkorian Empire. After Jayavarman VII recaptured the badly damaged Angkorian capital from the Cham invaders in 1181, He began a massive building campaign across the empire, constructing Angkor Thom as his new capital city. He began with existing structures such as Baphuon and Phimeanakas and built a grand enclosed city around them, adding the outer wall/moat and some of Angkor's greatest temples including his state temple, Bayon, set at the centre of the city. There are five entrances (gates) to the city, one for each cardinal point, and the victory gate leading to the Royal Palace area. Each gate, as well as much of Jayavarman VII'S architecture is crowned with 4 giant faces. The South Gate of Angkor Thom is often the first stop on a tour of the temples (www.angkorholiday.com).



Bayon, an architectural muddle, was the Jayavarman VII'S state temple and in many ways represents the pinnacle of his massive building campaign. The giant stone faces of Bayon have become one of the most recognizable images connected to classic Khmer art and architecture. There are 37 standing towers, most but not all sporting four carved faces oriented toward the cardinal points. The best of Bayon are the has-relief on the exterior real-life scenes from the historical sea battle between the Khmer and the Cham. It is not clear whether this represents the Cham invasion of 1177AD or a later battle in which the Khmer were victorious (www.angkorholiday.com).



Banteay Srey, translated as 'citadel of the women', lies 28 km from Siem Reap. It is a modern designation, discovered by French archaeologists relatively late in 1914, that probably refers to the delicate beauty of the carvings built at a time when the Khmer Empire was gaining significant power and territory. A Brahmin counselor under powerful king, Rajendravarman and later under Jayavarman V had constructed the temple. Banteay Srey displays some of the finest examples of classical Khmer art. The walls are densely covered with some of the most beautiful, deep and intricate carvings of any

Angkorian temple. The temple's relatively small size, pink sandstone construction and ornate design give it a fairyland ambiance. The colors are best before 10:30 AM and after 2:00, but there are fewer tourists in the afternoon (www.angkorholiday.com).

4.2.2.1.2. Preah Vihear

Preah Vihear province is going to be one of Cambodia's major tourist destinations. Today, it remains one of Cambodia's most sparsely populated provinces, home to jungles and scrub forest, and a small, dusty provincial capital that is but a mere village. But Preah Vihear also happens to have three *major* temple sites. Until recent years, the three main sites (Preah Vihear, Koh Ker, and Preah Khan aka Bakan) were accessible only to the most hardy and determined of travelers. But roads have been built, mines removed, and jungle cleared.



Preah Vihear is bordered by Stung Treng to the east, Kompong Thom to the south, Siem Reap to the southwest, Oddar Meanchey to the northwest, and Thailand to the north. Access to the province is by road only and at present there are only two decent roads into the province, from the west via Oddar Meanchey province and from the south from Kompong Thom. There is a road to Stung Treng, which in the dry season

is rather easy on a motorbike, but is otherwise not a viable route to take (www.talesofasia.com).

Preah Vihear is perched on a hilltop with a commanding view of its surroundings. Predating Angkor Wat by 100 years, the history of the temple/fortress is unclear but it is known to be dedicated to the god Shiva and thought to have been constructed in the reign of Suryavarman I (1002-50), with further significant additions by Suryavarman II (1113-50). Due to its location on the border, ownership of the area was disputed until 1967, when the International Court of Justice ruled that it belonged to Cambodia - which soon after plunged into civil war.



The temple opened briefly to the public in 1992, only to be occupied by the Khmer Rouge the next year (and some rusting artillery guns still litter the area). It opened again from the Thai side at the end of 1998, and Cambodia completed the construction of a long-awaited access road in 2003. While the temple is located in Cambodia, access to the temple is possible both from Thailand as well, with no Cambodian visa required



From Thailand, the temple is at the end of Route 221. The nearest town is Kantharalak, which can be accessed by frequent public bus in 2 hours or so from the nearby towns of Ubon Ratchathani and Si Saket. From Cambodia, a packed laterite access road from Siem Reap via Along Veng, a distance of over 200 km, was completed in 2003. A new road has been constructed linking Siem Reap to Koh Ker.



Source: www.private.addcom.de

The major attractions at Preah Vihear starts with 162 stone step with a short set of stairs decorated with nagas and Gopura I, a solitary pavilion with a fluttering Cambodian flag. A 500-meter gently climbing avenue leads up to Gopura II that is

another smallish pavilion and a large *boray* (water cistern) to the left. Yet another avenue leads to the first courtyard of Gopura III. Make a detour to the left side of the *gopura* to see relics of a more modern era, in the form of a rusting artillery gun and a few bunkers. A short causeway decorated with nagas leads to the inevitable Gopura IV and behind it the second courtyard. On the other side of the courtyard is Gopura V, and beyond it the Main Sanctuary, the centerpiece of the site which now houses a miniature Buddhist temple. But what makes the effort worthwhile lies just outside at Pei Ta Da Cliff, with a sheer 500-meter drop and a jaw-dropping vista of the Cambodian jungles below. There's one more sight worth seeing in the area, accessible only from the Thai side. Pha Moh I-Daeng, clearly signposted from the parking lot and only a few hundred meters up the hill, is the present Thai border and the new home of the flagpole that previously fluttered on Pei Ta Da. There are more stunning views of Cambodian jungle here, including a side view of Preah Vihear - although seen from afar the buildings blend surprisingly well into the hillside (www.wikitravel.org).

4.2.2.1.3. Sombor Prei Kuk

The ancient city where monuments of Sambo Prei Kuk are found today was identified as ISANAPURA, the capital of Chenla in 7th century. Main archaeological features in these groups of monuments are said to have been founded by king ISANAVARMAN I, the son of king Citrasena. Many decorative details in Khmer architecture and sculpture are classified as Sambor style: the name was derived from these monuments dated in the first half of the 7th century. Henceforth, this kingdom was the leading state and comprised the whole of Cambodia proper. Furthermore, several successions of kings' reign might have maintained these monuments as their capital city. The century following the death of JAYAVARMAN I who is the last known king of this kingdom in the second half of the 7th century is a dark period in the history of Chenla. According to a Chinese accounts, in the 8th century, the country of Chenla was divided

into land and water Chenlas. The obscurity prevails and this monument might be neglected thereafter. The history is traced again with the accession of JAYAVARMAN II, who founded a new polity that is now referred as Angkor in the beginning of 9th century. Decorative details of Prasat Tao (Central Group) are similar to the style of the remains belong to the period of the king JAYAVARMAN II, Particularly, characteristic lion statues resembles the statues found in Phnom Penh. From these reasons, this architectural complex was constructed in this period. Furthermore some inscriptions in Prasat Sambor (Northern Group) are dated in the 10th century under the reign of the king RAJENDRA VARMANII. And Robang Romeas group that is located about 2km northward from main temple area, contains other inscriptions of the king SURYAVARMAN I period. Some other decorative details and statues belong to the late Angkor period styles were confirmed from these temples. These historical evidences suggest that these monuments must have belonged to the important provincial principle city after Pre Angkor period.



From above historical perspective, this group of monuments is extremely significant not only for Cambodia but also for the entire area of Southeast Asia, for they are the only remaining sound architectural constructions that exemplify the architecture and sculpture of the early period in sizable quantity (www.tourismcambodia.com).

Sambor Prei Kuk cluttering sanctuaries were located in Sambor Village, Kampong Cheuteal Commune, Prasat Sambor District in Kampong Thom Province (www.tourismcambodia.com). King Mahendravarman had reigned from 607 to 616, was a son of a king Sambor Prei Kuk style characterized the real Khmer talent. After right received influence and developed its own arts sufficient to the modern development, arts and civilization of Angkor was the great achievement in Southeast Asia. The well-known city was called Isanapura is presently located at Sambor Prei Kuk, Kampong Thom Province. Sambor Prei Kuk is 25km north of Provincial Town of Kampong Thom (www.tourismcambodia.com). Some Sambor Prei Kuk's temples are completely "dressed" by trees and roots, which in the course of the years, are "sculptured" all around and enclose some temples as vegetable octopuses (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).





This complex groups together at least 176 monuments, among which 106 in a ray of 5 km. Three complexes, dedicated to Shiva, were surrounded with two surrounding walls. They are towers in bricks, varied forms, square, oblong, octagonal, ten metres high on ten metres wide. The brick is very finely sculptured in strong relief whose decoration is typically of inspiration or Indian copy. (The lion is often represented. But this animal did not exist in Cambodia). The door's frames are in stoneware. Most of these temples date of the beginning of the 7th century, 600 years before Angkor Vat. Girders of Sambor Prei Kuk's temples, very well preserved, are stored near of the old house of the French curator, house still carrying the tracks of cannon's knocks fired by the Red Khmers (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org). By observation, there are 52 small and big sanctuaries are in fairly good condition, the other 52 sanctuaries were fallen down and buried into the ground, and then became small hills. The sanctuaries were built of brick and limestone with the decoration of bas-relief on the scenery walls. The foundation of sanctuary was made of laterite; false door, diamond column and the sculptures were made of sandstone (www.tourismcambodia.com).

4.2.2.1.4. Phnom Penh and surroundings

Situated at the confluence of three great rivers - known as 'Chaktomuk' (four faces) or the 'Quatre Bras' (four faces) of the Mekong, Tonle Sap and Bassac rivers - Phnom Penh is the capital city, located in the south-central region of Cambodia. Along with Siem Reap, Phnom Penh is a significant global and domestic tourist destination for Cambodia. It is also the gateway to an exotic land, the ancient temples of Angkor in the west, the beaches of Sihanoukville and Kep on the southern coast, the ethnic minority people, jungles and wildlife of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces in the northeast and a wide-open, unspoiled countryside of rice paddies, little villages and lost temples across the country just waiting to be explored (www.canbypublications.com). It is also the commercial, political and cultural hub of Cambodia and is home to more than 1 million of Cambodia's population of 13.8 million (www.en.wikipedia.org).

Phnom Penh City has several cultural and historical attractions including the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum, Wat Phnom and other historical sites such as the old capital of Oudong and the Angkorian ruins of Phnom Chisor and Phnom Da lie within an easy day-trip of Phnom Penh. The city also offers a full compliment of visitor services and facilities including accommodations ranging from five star hotels to budget guesthouses, some of best restaurants and dining in Southeast Asia, a vibrant all-night bar and entertainment scene, and a unique and varied array of shopping opportunities (www.canbypublications.com).



National Museum – Phnom Penh was built in 1917 in traditional Khmer architecture and inaugurated in 1920 by King Sisowat. It houses more than 5000 pre-Angkorian artifacts and it is the world best collections of Khmer archaeological, religious and artistic artifacts from the 4th to 13th century (www.asiatours.net).

Royal Palace is a complex of buildings, which are the royal abode of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Its full name in the Khmer language is Preah Barom Reachea Vaeng Chaktomuk. The French mainly built the palace in 1866 on the site of the old town. The Kings of Cambodia have occupied it since the year 1866, with a period of absence when the country came into turmoil during and after the reign of the Khmer Rouge. The palace was started after King Norodom relocated the royal capital from Oudong to Phnom Penh after the mid-1800s. It was gradually built atop an old citadel called Banteay Kev. It faces towards the East and is situated at the Western bank of four divisions at the Mekong River called Chaktomuk (an allusion to Brahma) (www.en.wikipedia.org). The French built the pagoda-style compound. The main building on the compound is the Throne Room, which was built in 1917. It has a tiered roof and a tower, influenced by Angkor's Bayon Temple. It was used for coronations and other official occasions such as reception of foreign ambassadors when they presented their official credentials (www.asiatours.net).



Source: www.en.wikipedia.org

Wat Phnom is located on a man-made hill, 27 meters high, from which the city takes his name. The Lady Penh built the pagoda for the first time in 1372 to house four

Buddha statues being deposited by the waters of the Mekong River. The present temple was built in 1926 (www.asiatours.net).



Source: www.en.wikipedia.org

The Silver Pagoda (official name: Preah Vihear Preah Keo Morokat) in Phnom Penh is the most notable wat (Buddhist temple) in the city and is the official temple of the King of Cambodia. It is named for the 5,000 silver tiles, which are used to pave the temple's floor. It boasts a life-size Buddha image made of solid gold, and is a popular tourist attraction. The Silver Pagoda is a compound located on the North side of the palace complex. It features a royal temple officially called Preah Vihear Preah Keo Morakot but is commonly referred to as Wat Preah Keo. Its main building houses many national treasures such as gold and jeweled Buddha statues. Most notable is a small 17th century baccarat crystal Buddha (the "Emerald Buddha" of Cambodia) and a near-life-size, Maitreya Buddha encrusted with 9,584 diamonds dressed in royal regalia commissioned by King Sisowath. During King Sihanouk's pre-Khmer Rouge reign, the Silver Pagoda was inlaid with more than 5,000 silver tiles and some of its outer facade was remodeled with Italian marble (www.en.wikipedia.org).

The Killing Fields - Boeung Choeung Ek, situated 15 kilometres southwest of Phnom Penh and made famous by the film of the same name, was a place where more than 17,000 civilians were killed and buried in massive graves. Many of them were transported here after detention and torture in Toul Sleng. This place is a chilling reminder of the brutalities of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime. In the centre of the area is a 17-story glass stupa, which houses 8000 skulls exhumed from mass graves. Please note that both the Toul Sleng Museum and the Killing Fields exhibits may be disturbing for some and aren't suitable for younger children and adults who are easily shocked.

Independence Monument was built in 1958 as a memorial to Cambodia's war dead after the gaining of independence from France in 1953 in the Angkorian style, consists of five levels decorated with 100 snakeheads. It is at its most impressive later in the afternoon with shadows highlighting the complexity of the design and giving the structure a warm orange glow.



The Tonle Sap Riverfront as the recently refurbished park is the focal point for the Phnom Penh residents' leisure activities. Early risers can see the many locals welcoming the new day with Tai Chi and other exercises while the sun rises majestically over the river. In the early evening and all day Sunday many people stroll, picnic or just sit and watch the world go by. Vendors all along the riverfront serve local delicacies and

visitors can indulge in dried salted fish or another favourite of boiled duck embryos still in the shell.

The Central Market (New Market) is one of the largest and busiest markets in Phnom Penh. Built in 1937 by French architects and surprisingly cool, even in the heat of the hottest day, many interesting products are available. The eastern side, which is the main entrance, has many souvenirs and ornaments on sale from T-shirts to large stone heads. In the centre are the many jewellery stores and precious stone vendors as well as a plethora of electronic goods merchants, cloth sellers and other dealers; most of them selling things considerably cheaper than back home.

The Toul Tom Pong Market (The Russian Market) is probably the city's best source of objects d'art. Items for sale include wooden and stone carvings, various ritual objects, silverware, and old Indochinese notes and coins. There is a large range of antiquities and curios for those prepared to ferret around the various stalls and there are also gold and silversmiths inside the market who can be seen custom making jewellery. This place is a good source of both Cambodian and Chinese silk and clothes and one of the most popular markets in Phnom Penh with foreign residents and tourists who can spend many an interesting hour browsing before choosing that perfect gift.

The O'Russe Market on the North side of the Olympic Stadium is a typical Cambodian market catering to the everyday needs of the populace. The sights and smells of this market give the visitor the feel of a local market with many house-wives still purchasing their foodstuffs on a daily basis. This market is full of local character and one can only imagine the banter that takes place between all the vendors and customers and one of the best selections of the different types of fruit from all over the region, though the choice, naturally, depends on the season. The Olympic Market is probably one of the cheapest markets in town with lots of wholesaling going on here. It was renovated and reopened in 1994 as a three story modern building with reportedly Cambodia's only escalators.

About an hour west of Phnom Penh, just off Route #5, lay the hills of the abandoned royal city, **Oudong**. Oudong was the capital of Cambodia from the early 17th century until 1866 when the capital was moved to Phnom Penh. Several temples, stupas and other structures cover three hills. The walk up the hill provides an excellent countryside view. There are stupas containing the remains of several Cambodian kings including King Monivong (1927-1941) and King Ang Duong (1845-1859). The earliest structure is from the 13th century. These hills were also the site of some of the Khmer Rouge's most prolonged resistance against the encroaching Vietnamese army in 1979. For something completely different, take a side trip to 'Prasat Nokor Vimean Sour', a concrete, unduly ornate, semi-replica of Angkor Wat built circa 1998. Buses depart for Oudong every hour (www.canbypublications.com). Oudong offers spectacular views of the surrounding country and the innumerable sugar palm trees that punctuate the countryside. King Ang Dung, the great grandfather of the present king, King Sihanouk, was crowned here and many locals and foreign residents alike picnic here on weekends.

Phnom Chisor, the ancient Khmer temple stands on an 80 by 100 metre square plateau and faces east. Constructed in the 11th century of laterite and brick with carved sandstone lintels, the complex is surrounded by the partially ruined walls of a two and a half metre wide gallery with inward facing windows. As with the other hilltop temples there are spectacular views of the surrounding countryside and Phnom Chisor makes an ideal excursion combined with Tonle Bati/ Ta Prohm Temple.

Tonle Bati / Ta Prohm Temple, located not far South of Phnom Penh on the route to Phnom Chisor, is a 12th century temple of Ta Prohm, built by Jayavaraman VII (1181-1201). Consecrated to the Buddha and the Brahma, the temple is noted for its refined bas reliefs. Nearby is a smaller temple, Yeay Peau, which also has remarkable stone carvings. Near Ta Prohm is a small lake, Tonle Bati, which is similar to Kien Svay

as a leisure resort though on a smaller scale. Again there are "Water Houses" for rent and various food stalls (www.en.wikipedia.org).

4.2.2.1.5. Koh Ker

Koh Ker, also known as Chok Gargyar - 'Island of Glory' (www.btinternet.com), was the Capital of the Khmer Empire for a very brief period from the year 928 to 944 AD. In this short time, some very spectacular buildings and immense sculptures were constructed. Left to the jungle for nearly a millennium and mostly un-restored, this great archaeological site has been rarely visited until very recently (www.wikitavel.org).

Koh Ker is located in barren hill country some 85 kilometres (53 miles) northeast of Angkor, in the province of Preah Vihear (www.btinternet.com). This remote area has no towns and only a small village in cleared forest nearby. The village of Sra Yong is a few kilometres away. Koh Ker is not the easiest temple to get to as involves an early start and a long journey to get there from anywhere. The site is about 100 km north of Siem Reap and the road, repaired in 2004, is in decent condition (by Cambodian standards). There are no public transport or tourist facilities other than makeshift tables near the police camp at the entrance to Prasat Thom (www.wikitavel.org).

The ancient Khmer city was home to Jayavarman IV who ascended the throne in 928 and in only a few years, he'd built many massive temples dedicated to Shiva, ruling over large numbers of people and in considerable splendour for twenty years until succeeded by his son Harshavarman I. The capital was moved back to Angkor in 944 (www.btinternet.com). Koh Ker is in a distant jungle location with up to a hundred ruined temples including a huge stepped pyramid, which is the largest in the region. More ancient temples are being found in the jungle so there is a true sense of discovery here. Many of the temples were built in brick using a mortar made from tree sap. It is quite remarkable how well they have stood up to the test of time. There are temples in

abundance. Most are brick built and all are in a picturesque state of ruin with many being overgrown (www.wikitavel.org).



Source: www.adybrouwer.co.uk, www.btinternet.com, www.asiatravel-cambodia.com

The chief monument at Koh Ker was the magnificent temple of Prasat Thom, which has since been severely damaged. A seven-tiered sandstone pyramid some forty metres high, over 40 inscriptions, dating from 932 to 1010 have been found at the site. Nearby, a famous sandstone hand was discovered in the imposing structure known as Prasat Kraham (the red temple), while two giant wrestling apes were found at Prasat Chen. The unique style of the Koh Ker period shows Khmer architecture and sculpture on a monumental scale. The many monuments at the Koh Ker site have yielded large numbers of gigantic sculptures, both human and animal, most of which are on display in the National Museum in Phnom Penh (www.btinternet.com).

4.2.2.1.6. Phnom Da

Angkor Borei is a town in the area of several ruins and archaeological digs. The area has been continuously inhabited for at least 2500 years and has yielded artifacts dating from the Funan period (4th/5th century) and Chenla (8th century) as well as the later Angkorian period. The small temple of Ashram Maha Rosei below the hill, Phnom Da, was constructed in the late 7th-early 8th century, during the Chenla period, under Bahavavarman. The prasat ruins of Phnom Da on top of the hill are 11th century C.E. Angkorian era constructed under King Rudravarman. Note the carvings on the lintels and the unusual north-facing entrance. There is a small museum in Angkor Borei displaying some of the artefacts from the area (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).





Source: www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org

4.2.2.1.7. Beng Melea

Driving through the countryside and the rice fields alongside the Kulen Mountain range, Beng Melea is 50km from Siem Reap. Constructed in the late 11th century temple and a distinctly Angkor Wat style, Beng Melea preceded and may have served as a prototype of sorts for Angkor Wat. Very few carvings or bas-reliefs are evident and may never have existed. When the temple was active, the walls may have been covered, painted or had frescos. In its time, Beng Melea was at the crossroads of several major highways that ran to Angkor, Koh Ker, Preah Vihear (in northern Cambodia) and northern Vietnam (www.southtravels.com). The temple has been neglected and is still seldom visited. The galleries, pools, libraries and sanctuaries lie under fig-tree roots and creepers, waiting to be discovered. The scene at this temple has hardly changed since the French stumbled across it in the middle of the 19th century. Its gray-black stones splashed with green algae are perfectly disguised by the dense jungle, which for centuries has claimed and smothered the buildings. In many places tree roots, looks like the tentacles of a giant octopus (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).



Source: travel.webshots.com, www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org

4.2.2.1.8. Banteay Chhama

The site is about 23 km from the provincial capital of Sisophon and 3 hours by road from Siem Reap-Angkor. A rarely visited temple is located deep in the Cambodian jungle near the Thai border. It was one of the capitals of Jayavarman II. It was rebuilt by Jayavarman VII and dedicated to his son (who died defending the Khmer empire against the Champa kingdom) and four generals who were killed in the battle repelling a Cham Invasion in 1177.

Surrounding temples include Prasat Mebon, Prasat Taphrom, Prasat Samnang Tasok, Prasat Banteay Toap and Prasat Ta Preav, But very little is known about it. Built over nine square kilometres and surrounded by a moat, the site echoes the architectural layout of the better-known Khmer temple complexes of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. The site is renowned for its beautifully rendered bas-reliefs, which depict the war between the Khmer and Champa kingdoms and the accession of the Khmer king (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).



Source: www.angkowjourney.asievoyage.org

4.2.2.2. Attractions related to the minor promotional theme of natural and cultural tourism

4.2.2.2.1. North Eastern Cambodia

The area of northeastern Cambodia comprises Rattanakiri, Mondulakiri, Streung Treng and Kratie.

Rattanakiri, this Northeastern province had left isolated from the rest of the country for many decades due to poor road conditions in the past. Conditions today have improved though certain sectors may require some careful maneuvering. The province boasts some of the most beautiful landscapes and is home to several settlements of ethnic hill tribes. It has also many interesting natural sites that are unique to the territory. There is an incredibly beautiful waterfall, a tranquil volcanic lake and a dense rain forest rich in a variety of flora and fauna. A distinct contrast from 21st century opulence, this province remains largely uncorrupted as the majority of the population here is made up of ethnic minority groups all living harmoniously to complement the natural ambience that makes the province very attractive to urban dwellers. Each tribe

has its own territory and town structure, some of these are hidden deep in the jungle making it even more interesting for the tourist since getting there means trekking and this can be done on elephant rides as well. Early at dawn, men are usually out hunting for food while women stay at the village picking fruit or working in the rice the fields. Goods and services are paid for through an exchange process or bartering system so money is sometimes considered worthless in these communities. Experiencing these people's way of life can certainly be a rewarding experience for visitors to the Northeast (www.hotelscambodia.org).



Source: www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org

The major attractions in Rattanakiri are Yeak Loam Lake, Eisey Patamak Mountain, Katieng Waterfall, Ou'Sean Lair waterfall, Ou'Sensranon waterfall, Cha Ung waterfall, Veal Rum Plan (Stone field), Virachay National Park and Lumphat Wildlife Sanctuary.



Source: www.phnompenhtours.com

Mondulkiri: Traveling eastward from Kompong Cham to Sen Momorm or the capital of Mondulkiri, the hill top town is surrounded by many scenes of natural beauty – dense forests, lush green hills and beautiful waterfalls. Ten different ethnic hill tribes are found to be setting here. The majority is the Phnong minority peoples. They live off the land, planting rice, fruit trees and a variety of vegetables. Others grow strawberries and maintain small plots of coffee, rubber, cashew and avocado trees. The province is proving to be an ideal eco- tourism destination and satisfies travelers who are out for adventure. Recommended activities are elephant trekking, mountain biking, fishing and swimming. At the moment, the only way to access this town is by road from Kampong Cham, which is now accessible, all year round (www.hotelscambodia.org).



Source: www.cambodiahome.com, www.hotelscambodia.org

Steung Treng is a nice little province on the border with Laos. The provincial capital sits on the Sekong River and nearby Mekong River. A boat trip across the Mekong takes the visitors to the Thalabarivat, a pre-Angkorian temple made of bricks. This quiet river town is only 40 kilometers away from Laos. The border between Cambodia and Laos is now open and this is the only gateway to get to Laos by boat. The journey to Laos by boat is only possible during the rainy season, when the water level is high enough to allow boats to pass easily through the upper Mekong sector (www.hotelscambodia.org).

Kratie Province, located on east bank of the Mekong River is rich logging and fishery. This section of the Mekong River that runs through this province brings fertile soil and diversified marine life. Fishes harvested in this part of the river are said to be of high quality and are ideally good for export. The province is also home to an endangered species of freshwater dolphin- the pink dolphin. They live in this part of Mekong River and Cambodia is proud to conserve them (www.hotelscambodia.org).



Source: www.hotelscambodia.org, Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia

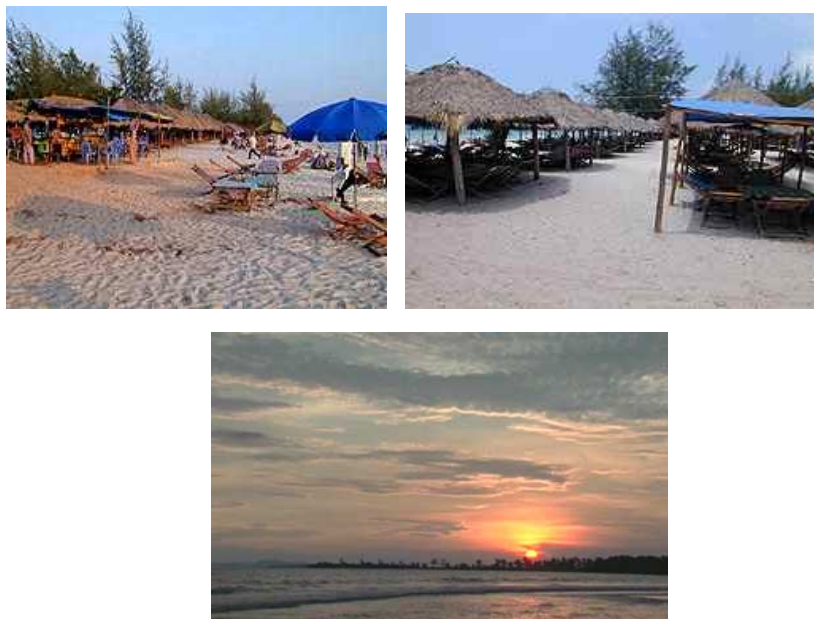
The following three attractions are along the road leading north from town of Kratie. The road itself offers a pleasant sight into life along the Mekong and many of the homes are of an older, more traditional style. The major attractions include Phnom Sombok, Kampi and Sambor.

4.2.2.2.2. Sihanouk Ville

Sihanouk Ville, 230 km from Phnom Penh, is the provincial centre (Town) of the Kampong Som province. The town was named after King Sihanouk (in power 1954 - 1970) as a dedication to his effort of creating a port city to improve the international trades. The town was re-named "Kampong Som city", after the King was overthrown in 1970 by Lon Nol, his military leader. Many people these days still call the port city Kampong Som (www.travel-cambodia.com).

Sihanouk Ville is Cambodian finest beach resort and it offers an exceptionally well-preserved natural environment. This tropical beach with pristine clear water and glittering white sand is naturally decorated by splendid rock formations. The warm and tranquil water is perfect for swimming, sunbathing or just relaxing after tiring sightseeing. Besides the good beaches, the air in Sihanouk Ville is fresh and the place is famous for the seafood restaurants dishing out fresh and mouth-watering seafood cuisines. There are also many secluded islands where one can hire a boat to visit and perhaps practice diving in lovely underwater environment (www.hotelscambodia.org). There are several beaches in Sihanouk Ville but the most popular and developed one is O Chheu Teal beach. There are some other beaches sprawling along the cost but they are not as well developed, such as Chmkar Dong and Thmar Thom beaches. The popular beaches: Victoria, Independence, Sokha, O Chheu Teal, and O Tres (www.travel-cambodia.com).





Source: www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org, www.travel-cambodia.com

4.2.2.2.3. Kamot

Kamot shares border with Vietnam to the east and extends into the Gulf of Siam to the south. Because of abundance in limestone, the province produces cement. The paradise here comes in the form of a 1040 meters high Bokor Mountain. Bokor Hill station used to be one of the most popular recreational places during the French colonial period. The resort was established in the 1920s. On top of the mountain, an old Catholic Church built in French colonial style, hotel and a casino all abandoned to the wind, leaving evident of pas glory to the place. There are holiday villas and a Buddhist monastery built on a verge of the mountain cliff. A magnificent panoramic view of the Gulf of Siam can be seen from up here. The trip up the mountain provides a completely different travel experience (www.hotelcambodia.org).



Source: www.kampot.sihanoukville-cambodia.com, www.kheussler.de

Also in Kampot, is Kep city, which was established in 1908 (www.hotelscambodia.org). From the turn of the century through the 1960s, Kep was Cambodia's premier beach town," drawing weekend holidaymakers to its picturesque shores, and sporting the ocean side villas of the privileged class. Nowadays, the old villas are in ruins, and the town is known more for its oceanfront seafood stalls than for its beaches, which are narrow and stony, offering just a few slivers of sand. The main road along the oceanfront through the crab market, past small beaches and ritzy villas now is crumbling in disrepair (www.canbypublications.com). Kep is popular holiday destination to both local and foreign tourists. There is a regular crab market that itself serves well as a tour-attraction as fishermen come onto the beach with baskets after

baskets of freshly caught crabs attracting a huge gathering of interested buyers.

The beach here is sandy and the open sea breaths a welcoming breeze quit difficult for the sea-loving tourist to resist (www.hotelcambodia.org).



Source: www.en.wikipedia.org

4.2.2.2.4. Koh Kong

Koh Kong Province, one of Cambodia's most interesting tourist destinations due to its varied attractions ranging from small islands with white-sand beach to natural waterfalls. Koh Kong is a coastal village in the southwest corner of Cambodia. Koh Kong shares border with Thailand in the west. To the North are the Cardaman Mountains. The island is only 80 km away from Thailand's Koh Chang. This part of Cambodia is still relatively undeveloped for tourism but the potential is high (www.world66.com). Mountains and forests (70%) cover much of its area, and the rest opens up to the sea. Only a small percentage of the province is float surface. However, Koh Kong is enjoying quite a few tourism development projects. The newly built National Road 48 provides visitors yet another option to access the province by road. Although some effort has been made to improve the conditions of the road, the journey to Koh Kong can still be quite a breathtaking experience. It is highly recommend only to those who love nature and looking for something really adventurous. For the adventurous, the natural scenery along this road is absolutely stunning with tall green mountain that touched the cloud. Amidst thick forest, streams and charming waterfalls make interesting sites for stopovers

and photography (www.hotelscambodia.org). The major attractions include Cham Yeam Resort (natural and man-made resort), Koh Mool Resort (Koh Kong Krau), Khun Chhalgn Khun Phen Resort, Kbal Chhay Resort,, Sner beach, Veal achaut waterfall, Prek Chik O'srey Sranash (natural and wildlife preserves), Kbal Chhay Prek Koh waterfall.



Source: www.bayonpearnik.com, www.kheussler.de

4.2.2.2.5. Tonle Sap Lake, Siem Reap

Cambodia's Great Lake, the Boeung Tonle Sap (Tonle Sap Lake) located 15 km south of Siem Reap town, is the most prominent feature on the map of Cambodia - a huge dumbbell-shaped body of water stretching across the northwest section of the country. In the wet season, the Tonle Sap Lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in Asia, swelling to an expansive 12,000 km². During the dry half of the year the Lake shrinks to as small as 2500 km², draining into the Tonle Sap River, which meanders southeast, eventually merging with the Mekong River at the 'chaktomuk' confluence of rivers opposite Phnom Penh. But during the wet season a unique hydrologic phenomenon causes the river to reverse direction, filling the lake instead of draining it. The engine of this phenomenon is the Mekong River, which becomes bloated with snowmelt and runoff from the monsoon rains in the wet season. The swollen Mekong backs up into the Tonle Sap River at the point where the rivers meet at the 'chaktomuk' confluence, forcing the waters of the Tonle Sap River back upriver into the lake. The inflow expands the surface area of lake more than five-fold inundating the surrounding forested floodplain and supporting an extraordinarily rich and diverse eco-system. More than 100 varieties of water birds including several threatened and endangered species, over 200 species of fish, as well as crocodiles, turtles, macaques, otter and other wildlife inhabit the inundated mangrove forests. The Lake is also an important commercial resource, providing more than half of the fish consumed in Cambodia. In harmony with the specialized ecosystems, the human occupations at the edges of the lake is similarly distinctive - floating villages, towering stilted houses, huge fish traps, and an economy and way of life deeply intertwined with the lake, the fish, the wildlife and the cycles of rising and falling waters.



Source: www.angkor-cambodia.org

Chong Khneas is the floating village at the edge of the lake closest and most accessible to Siem Reap. If you want a relatively quick and easy look at the Tonle Sap, boat tours of Chong Khneas are available, departing from the Chong Khneas boat docks all day long. The boatman will probably point out the differing Khmer and Vietnamese floating households and the floating markets, clinics, schools and other boatloads of tourists. Chong Khneas, while interesting, is over-tourist and is not as picturesque and 'unspoiled' as floating villages further from Siem Reap. The boat trip usually includes two stops: one at a touristy floating 'fish and bird exhibition' with a souvenir and snack shop, and the other at the very highly recommended Gecko Environment Centre, which offers displays and information introducing the ecology and biodiversity of the lake area.





Source: www.angkor-cambodia.org

The 'bird sanctuary' at the Prek Toal core area of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve has been called "the single most important breeding ground in Southeast Asia for globally threatened large waterbirds." The Biosphere covers 31,282 hectares at the northwest tip of the Tonle Sap Lake and plays host to species including Greater and Lesser Adjuncts, Black-headed Ibis, Painted Stork, Milky Stork, Spot-billed Pelican, Grey-Headed Fish Eagle and many more species. Of the three Biosphere core areas on the Tonle Sap Lake, Prek Toal is the most accessible from Siem Reap and the most popular with birdwatchers. The best time of year for viewing is the dry season when flocks of migratory birds congregate at Prek Toal. As the dry season progresses and the water recedes, the number of birds increases but the travel to some of the more important viewing areas becomes more difficult (www.canbypublications.com).

4.2.2.2.6. Kampong Thom

'Kampong Pos Thom' was the original name of the present call 'Kampong Thom'. Because originally long time ago, at the dock of Sen river next to a big natural lake, there was a big cave with a pair of big snakes inside. The people living around this area usually saw these big snakes every Buddhist Holiday. Time after that, the snakes disappeared and the people of that area called Kampong Pos Thom. Then, only short words 'Kampong Thom'. During the French colony in Cambodia, the French

ruled and divided Cambodian territory into provinces, and named them according to the spoken words of the people called 'Kampong Thom Province' until now.



Kampong Thom is a province located at the central point of the Kingdom of Cambodia, 162km, and north of Phnom Penh Capital on the way of RN6 to Siem Reap Angkor. Kompong Thom is one of the five provinces surrounding Tonle Sap Lake. The province is divided into two parts. Eastern part of National Road 6 Covers 70% surface consisting of forests and plateau, rich in natural resources which are good for agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry. Western of part of National Road 6 Covers 30% surface is the plain area extending to Tonle Sap Lake. This area is good for rice cultivation and fishing for supporting the needs of the province and exporting to other. Kampong Thom is also a province-rich in tourism potentials to attract national and international tourists such as the exotic lakes, rivers, forests, mountain and more than 200 ancient temples (www.tourismcambodia.com). Major attractions are as follows:

Kampong Thom is the base for excursions to the important archaeological site of Sambor Prei Kuk, the ancient capital of Chenla. Just 35 km away from the city, this site can only be reached by travelling down an unpaved road. Approximately 170 temples from the pre-Angkorian period (7th century) can be found here surrounded by lush forest. Other tourist attractions are the mountain Phnom Santuk, Prasat Kuh Nokor

temple ruins, the 11th century Prasat Kok Rokar temple, the temples Prasat Phum Prasat and Prasat Andet, the natural and cultural site of Prey Pros and the bird sanctuary of Boeung Tonle Chmar.

Prasat Kuh Nokor (was built in 10th -11th century by the king Suryavarman I: 1002-1050), is located in Trodoc Pong Village, Pong Ror Commune, Baray District, Kampong Thom Province and is in the complex of Wat Kuh Nokor (Buddhist Pagoda). These sanctuaries were built on the flat ground, on a square terrace made of laterite and sandstone facing to the East with the rampart surrounding. This rampart has a 35m-length (East to West) and a 25m-width (North to South). There is surrounding rampart of one meter height and 0.8 meter thick with two gateways: Eastern gateway is 9m height divided into 3 rooms, and western gateway is small and has square shape. The structures of the buildings are mixed, made of laterite and the decoration of sandstone. East of the temple, there are 2 ponds-the small one has about one-meter depth, 45-meter length and 20-meter width, and the big one has 160-meter length, 88-meter width and more than one-meter depth.

Prasat Kok Rokar is located in Rokar Phum, Srayov Commune, Stung Sen District, Kampong Thom province in a 14-km distance from Provincial Town of Kampong Thom. The temple was built of sandstone and laterite in Khleung style at the end of 11th century during the reign of king Suryavarman I to dedicate to Siva. This isolated sanctuary (dimension: 6m x 5m; 8m height) was built on the hill and faced to the east. The body of the central temple has conical form with porches opening to the east, and a door reached from the eastern entrance (three other doors were the false doors). The diamond column has octagonal forms, and the three lintels have various forms. Based on the study to the site, the sanctuary was formed in rectangular shape. The outside rampart has 25m x 25m size and Gopura from the four directions, which jointed to the surrounding laterite rampart. Outside the rampart, there were likely moats surrounded as we saw some marks remain until now. In observation to the temple's court, there were lintels and inscriptions available at the surrounding. The lintels have various styles some

in Sambor Prei Kuk, some in Prei Khmeng and some in Kulen style. This didn't mean that the artists built the mixed styles. According to the elderly resident there said that during the French colony in Cambodia, these ancient objects were brought from other temples to gather here in preparing to break into small parts that would then be used to pave the roads, but they didn't construct the roads yet due to the war happened in the Country that why these ancient objects remained there. On the hill 1km from the temple, where they held midnight ceremony every full moon day with making virgin girls dancing around the fired place to pray for the rain. Only the virgin girls can attend this ceremony.

Prasat Phum, located in Prasat Village, Prasat Commune, Snatuk District, Kampong Thom Province. This temple located in a 27-km district from Provincial Town of Kampong Thom, and there is road from the southern direction of 500-meter length. This temple was built of brick, masonry and sandstone in 8th century (706) with Kampong Preah style to dedicate to Siva. It was a sanctuary built temple on the flat terrace without the false door and faced to the east. In the ancient period, the doors were made by two wooden boards-one carved with sculptures of male divinities at another one carved with female divinities. The southern-framed door was inscribed with five lines of inscription, and its back was mostly eroded. The lintel was ornamented by the garlands; the diamond column we carved with carousing motifs; and the upper corner of the temple contained the segments of Linga and Yoni. Southeast of the temple, there were other two more temples (at present, they became the small hills). South of the large temple, there was a hill called Toul Samrong or Toul Nak Ta Samrong; and east of this hill, there was a Pou tree in which the local people call Toul Nak Ta Deum Pou (the hill of the body tree spirit). In ancient time, this place was the former royal palace where the royal valuables were kept. Then it was excavated and the valuables were taken away during the French colony. This sanctuary was in seriously ruined condition, in 1996 the brick of the southern and western towers dropped down due to the trees growing and the strong wind blowing on them. Besides, there was lack of conservation and protection leading to

the serious damages caused by nature and aged existence at the sanctuary especially by the ignorant people.

Prasat Andet is located northwest of Provincial Town of Kampong Thom, in Prasat Village, Sankor Commune, Kampong Svay District, Kampong Thom Province. The temple was built in second half of 7th century (627-707) during the reign of king Jayavarman I to dedicate to God Harihara, in Kampong Preah style and made of brick with masonry, laterite and sandstone. Prasat Andet had isolated plan, built on a 5.30-meter height artificial hill, and was form in rectangular shape with 7.50-meter length, 5.50-meter width and 1-meter thick (interior to exterior). It was facing to the East. The lintel of Prasat Andet was carved in the garlands and carefully done in the traditional Khmer style. The coronet (2.22 lengths) was ornamented around by the rings decorated, and at between of the rings we decorated with garland and bulb flowers surrounded, which are joining each other by the end of the decorations. In original former time, this temple contained Harihara Statue standing on a decorative royal throne, and the statue was brought to keep at Phnom Penh National Museum. The Harihara statue is a body side's Siva and another body side's Vinu. The framed door had 1 m width, 2m heights and 0.20m thick. On the northern-framed door, we saw the marks of a cloven hoof of tiger cat that used to go to the upper box of the door, which remained the marks until now.

Bird Sanctuary of Boeng Tonle Chmar contains fishing lot 5 and lot 6, and is 30km far from Stoung District town of Kampong Thom Province, there were villages of Nesat, Kamong Kdei, Svay Kor, Mo Doung, Kampong Bradom and Msa Trang Tboung in Peam Bang Commune. The people living in this area with floating houses that are moving up and down according to the water levels in the jungle and flooded forest. The bird sanctuary of Boeng Chmar covers a land area of 400 hectares having an interconnecting network of water channels along the bank of Boeng Kla Lake, rich in flooded forests. This area connected with two big river tributaries (Stoung and Stung

Chik Kreng) flowing down to Boeng Chmar. Boeng Chmar is the sanctuary for many kinds of birds (www.tourismcambodia.com).

4.2.2.2.7. Kampong Chhnang

The province is centrally located on the Tonle Sap in the Tonle Sap Lake region of Cambodia. It can be reached by road on Route 5, the main road to Battambang, and is slightly less than 100 kilometers from Phnom Penh. Kampong Chhnang's main industries are fishing and rice growing, as well as pottery. In Khmer, Chhnang means pot. Kampong Chhnang in Cambodian means "Port of Pottery". There is also a lobster fishing industry. The province is famous for its high quality dried fish. With its green paddy fields, rivers and sugar palm-lined horizons, Kampong Chhnang is a wonderful place to spend a few lazy days and take in the sights of the traditional Cambodian way of life (www.trishawtours.com).



Source: www.trishawtours.com

Kampong Chhnang is a province well known for its fine clay pottery. The people in this province enjoy making pots, vases and various others types of ceramics during the season when they are neither planting nor harvesting rice (www.hotelscambodia.org). The visitors could visit the major attractions as Phnom Neang Kong Rei Mountain and Phnom Krang Romeas Resort. Phnom Neang Kong Rei Mountain is one of the most visited places in Kampong Chhnang province, and Cambodian tourists, especially during New Year. Sightseers and religious visitors, who value the mountain as a spiritual center for meditation, come from allover Cambodia. Phnom Krang Romeas Resort is the natural resort that has big trees with cool shadow

and fresh air, located between Sre Thmei commune and Svay Chrum Commune, Ro Lea Pha Ear district in two kilometer distance from the provincial town of Kampong Chhnang or 13 kilometer distance from Phnom Penh by the national road No 5 (www.trishawtours.com). While visiting this charming little town, it is a good idea to try a boat tour to the floating village where hundreds of floating homes can be seen (www.hotelscambodia.org).



Source: <http://cambodia.mellenthin.de>

4.2.2.2.8. Posat

Posat, from Phnom Penh to Batambang at 187 kilometres north of Phnom Penh, is a small town in western Cambodia, and is the capital of the province of the same name. The town centre is situated along the Stoeung Sen River. The town itself isn't much of an attraction, nor does it contain anything that will distinguish it from the other small provincial capitals in this country. One great thing it does offer, however, is fantastic access to the Cardamon Mountains, giving it a healthy potential for eco-tourism (www.wikitravel.org). Pursat would have been mentioned less without the tomb of a Khmer national hero Kleang Meung, who sacrificed his life and defeated the Thais in a battle in 1482 (www.discoveryindochina.com). This is the place of worship for the Spirit of this Nhek Ta. His statue was constructed in 1993 to replace an older statue that was destroyed during the civil war. Behind the statue is the place where local people gather

during Khmer New Year to play traditional games. On weekends and holidays, the place is flooded with Cambodian people who come to beseech the assistance of this eminent and powerful Spirit. Around the Venerable Site are several monuments and statues, offered by prominent Cambodian politicians as appreciation for His support (www.taxivantha.com). Pursat seems to have fewer resorts to describe than other provinces, we therefore hardly see the tourists besides those who stop for lunch and continue to Battambang. Most of the locals, same old story, basely live on farming and fishing, while some involve in manual work in marble carving what is uniquely present in Pursat (www.discoveryindochina.com).



Source: www.etravelphotos.com, www.taxivantha.com



4.2.2.2.9. Battambang

Sitting on the Sangker River just south west of the Tonle Sap Lake, Battambang town is at the heart of Cambodia's 'rice bowl', and even though it is the country's second biggest town, it still has a very local provincial atmosphere (www.canbypublications.com). It is famous for its rich natural resources and fertile soil, on which virtually anything can be grown with incredibly productive results. Battambang alone has the potential to feed the entire country with good quality rice. Rubies and garnets are among some of the precious stones mined in this province. The province's wealth of natural resources complemented by their legacy of cultural richness makes it

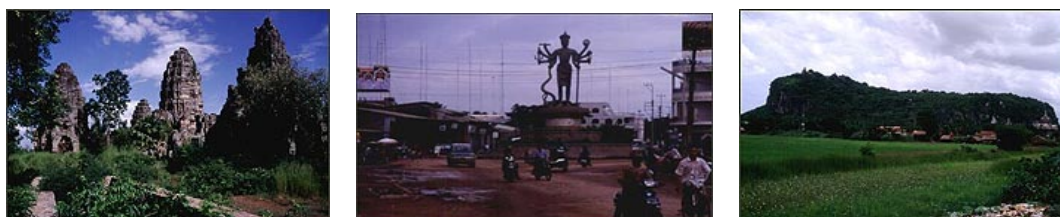
even more attractive not only to the tourist, but Cambodians as well. Battambang is home to many ancient temples dating back to between the 10th and 13th Centuries. These are certainly worth a visit as part of an interesting cultural excursion (www.hotelscambodia.org).



Source: www.travelmarker.nl, www.canbypublications.com

Much of the architecture is French colonial and traditional Cambodian. Few buildings are over three stories, and the main streets are shared by cars and horse carts alike. Unlike more tourist towns, the local economy is truly local - based firmly in rice, wood, sapphires and food crops - and is reflected in the character of the town. As leaving Battambang by road, the scene quickly becomes one of small villages, rice paddies, and farmland, offering an excellent opportunity for the visitor to see a bit of 'unspoiled' rural Cambodia. The nearby countryside also harbors old pagodas, Angkorian era ruins, caves, waterfalls and even Khmer Rouge period killing fields. Battambang means 'disappearing stick', and is named after a powerful stick used by a

legendary Khmer King to achieve and maintain power in the Battambang area (www.canbypublication.com). The major attractions in Battambang are as follows:



Source: www.talesofasia.com

Phnom Sampeau, about twenty-five kilometers along the road to Pailin, offers pagodas, war remnants, and holocaust memories. During the Pol Pot years a small temple on the hill's summit was used as a prison. Like most Khmer Rouge prisons there was only one way out - prisoners were marched about a hundred meters to a small cave opening, bludgeoned and pushed down a fifteen-meter deep hole. Many of the bones have since been collected and placed in a small enclosure as a memorial. A reclining Buddha lies nearby keeping vigil over the bones, another thumb in the face of the Khmer Rouge. A second cave not far away also houses a number of bones. A bit of military hardware lies about including some guns pointed at nearby Crocodile Mountain, so named by its obvious crocodile shape, a one-time Khmer Rouge controlled outpost. Apparently opposing forces spent a lot of time firing shells at each other's respective mountains (www.talesofasia.com).

Wat Ek Temple adapts the architecture of 11th century and built in 1027 during the reign of King, Sorayak Varman I (1002-1050). It is located at Piem Ek commune in 14 kilometer from the provincial town (www.tourismcambodia.com).

Ba Nan Temple adapts the architecture of mid 11th century and the end of 12th century the temple was first built by King, Ut Tak Yea Tit Tya Varman II (1050-1066) and was built finally built by the king, Jarvarman VII (1181-1219). The temple is located on the top of approximate 400 meter heighten mountain at Koh Tey 2 commune, Ba Nan

District in 15 kilometer distance from the provincial town by the provincial Road No 155 parallel to Sang Ke River. At the mountain's valley, there are Ku Teuk and two main natural well, namely: Bit Meas and Chhung or Chhung Achey (www.tourismcambodia.com).

Barseat Temple was built during the reign of King, Soriyak Varman I (1002-1050) and located on a hill at Ba Set village, Ta Pun commune in 15-kilometer distance from the provincial town. Ba Set temple adapts the architecture of 11th century and built in 1036 and 1042. Next to the temple, there is a pond having 20-meter length 12-meter width and 10 meter depth. The pond is never dried, though in the dry season. In rainy season, the water level is higher than usual (www.tourismcambodia.com).

Prasat Snung characterizes as three separated stupas made of brick, located on a hill having 30-meter length and 20-meter width, in Snung pagoda's area, Snung commune, Ba Nan District in 22-kilometer distance from the provincial town. According to the style at the gate, the temple is similar to other temples in 12th century. Behind the temple, there is another new constructing temple (www.tourismcambodia.com).

Phnom Sam Puoy Resort is the natural resort located along the National Road No 57 (the former National Road No10) at Sam Puoy commune (the high land having more than 100 meter height) in 12-kilometer distance from the provincial town of Battambang. On the top of Sam Puoy Mountain, there are temple and three natural wells, namely Pkar Slar, Lo Khuon and Ak So Pheak. Next to Sam Puoy Mountain, there are some main mountains, the natural site like Phnom Trung Moan, Phnom Trung Tea and Phnom Neang Rum Say Sork. These mountains related to the Cambodia folk legend of Reach Kol Neang Rum Say Sork (www.tourismcambodia.com).

SECTION 3: COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS BETWEEN THAI RESEARCHERS AND TOURISM BUSINESS SECTORS IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

The study has been conducted by interviewing the group of key informants in Vietnam and Cambodia in order to know their opinions of threats and problems associated with the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in the two countries to complement tourism in each country through cooperation and research in marketing and destination branding. The key informants confirmed that they do not previously have any experience to conduct cooperative activities with Thai researchers because of some several reasons. According to the results of the study, the overall data could then be respectively explained as follows:

1. There is the complicatedness in establishing the bilateral or multilateral collaborative networks between researchers and tourism business sectors. The coordination with relevant organizations in tourism industry in the three countries, namely Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia is not much appreciated. It will take long time for approval in some matters related to the cooperative activities if there are any concerns from the government body.

2. The issue of the government support from each country is very critical. There is a lack of serious support from the governments as the vision and objectives in tourism development is different and competitive rather than complementary. The tourism business sectors are not fully provided information about the overall tourism development and research projects within the region by their governments. To work with the government as the copartner, the researchers and tourism business sectors will encounter with the complicated system and bureaucracy.

3. There is a lack of meeting and understanding between the researchers of two countries such as Thailand- Vietnam or Thailand- Cambodia and vice versus and also between Thai researchers with business sectors of all countries. In addition, the critical

issue for the collaborative network is conflict in points of view and misunderstanding due to unclear presentation from all parties concerned.

4. The issue of funding and grants is one of the major threats that affect inefficiency in collaborative networks. There is inequity in sharing the supportive benefits to all parties from the organization research funds. For example, Thai researcher gets some grants while the associated parties from Vietnam and Cambodia have to contribute without any mutual compensation. This will cause less favorable results in working together.

5. There is a lack of statistic system and updated tourism data pool of information in Vietnam and Cambodia.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study of the ASEAN image positioning: the case of Vietnam and Cambodia is the study to explore in detail the possibility of countries, namely Vietnam and Cambodia complementing each other through identifying the distinctive identities and mutually differentiating the image positioning and promotional theme of tourism products in the destination marketing. The major objectives of the study are to study and investigate the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia towards the SWOT analysis, to propose the image position for Vietnam and Cambodia, to boost up the cooperative networks between the Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia and to establish the data bank in tourism among the ASEAN countries.

The research was conducted using qualitative research techniques. The research direction is comprised of review study of the documents concerned such as the tourism development plans and strategies of Vietnam and Cambodia and the investigation of information sources including the public and private tourism-related institutions from Hanoi, Vietnam and Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This is to examine the perceptions and perspectives of the tourism industry on the image positioning and specific promotional theme of tourism products for Vietnam and Cambodia, tourist attractions related to the proposed promotional themes as well as threats and problems to collaborative networks between Thai researcher and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia. The focus-group meetings and the structured interviews of a mix of questions both open and closed were used as the research tool to collect the

primary data. Information was sorted into headed categories. Content was considered in relation to the study objectives and the conceptual framework. Results of the analysis were explained in descriptive presentation. All contents mentioned were investigated to clearly answer the major objectives and research problems such as the following:

5.1.1. Explanation of the tourism development plans and strategies in Vietnam and Cambodia

The consequences exposed that tourism is employed as a significant tool for social, cultural and economic development by Vietnam and Cambodia. Relating to the tourism development, the direction of development heavily focuses on mono-country tourism. The goals on development of the two countries are to carry the country to be the leader in regional tourism. In Vietnam, the government uses a strategic approach to formulating national development planning within a long-term and short-term framework. The overall strategies on tourism development expect tourism to play a role in leading the country's culture, environment and national security to sustainability. The major consideration in preparing these tourism strategies is the need to improve the country from the stage of underdevelopment and to raise the country's image with the considered theme "Vietnam-a friendly and safety destination" as a strategic guide to bring tourism into play. The government considers elements of infrastructure development, competitiveness and strength of the economy, quality of human resources, technological capability and protection of environment as a firm basis for tourism development.

The tourism in Cambodia is seen as a most important factor that helps alleviate poverty within the country through sustainable economic development. The National Social and Economic Development Plan identified the primary development goal of the country to reduce poverty. The existing Cambodian National Tourism Development plan

2001-2005, is a comprehensive plan that provides objectives, policies and strategies for the medium-term period to develop tourism in a sustainable and pro poor direction. Investment in tourism activities and pro-poor investment are two core policies to guide tourism development.

Vietnam and Cambodia adopted slightly similar strategic approaches in guiding development on tourism. The comprehensive results of the analysis revealed that the policies of the two countries introduce the compatibility in the global perspective to develop tourism in the direction of a sustainable manner. Noticeably, Vietnam and Cambodia strategically use an aggressive mass marketing to increase the foreign exchange and number of arrivals, especially from international tourism.

5.1.2. Assessment of tourism development in Vietnam and Cambodia

Looking toward the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on the current situation of tourism development in Vietnam and Cambodia, the growth rate of tourism development in both countries is gradually increasing. Vietnam has high potential to develop the tourism industry while Cambodia shows the potential and keenness in tourism development at a moderate level. The increase of tourism facilities in the two countries such as hotels and other types of accommodation, tourism agents as tour operators and travel agents, restaurants, souvenir shops and augmented tourism facilities, along with a bundle of tourism resources, a variety of tourism products offered, more liberate trade policy and the increase of investor's interest in tourism business are important factors that has encouraged the rapid expansion of tourism. However, weaknesses and threats related to tourism development are infrastructure, transportation, human resources, marketing and promotion, empowerment of the investment from the regional economic system, conflicts of interests, lack of strong relationships and trust among governments, lack of efficient and serious support from governments, energy shortage and difference in standard quality of tourism products,

services and prices. Despite the fact that tourism growth is increasing, inconvenience in accessing the tourist attractions is still critical. Between the two countries of the study, Cambodia has provided more open free trade to support tourism development compared to Vietnam such as the policy of visa issuance and aviation. It is obviously seen that this finding supports the research accomplished by Dr. Tirasatayapitak in 2005 who examined the international collaborative tourism development in the Mekong Delta: Southeast Asia. She pointed out that the more liberate business policy in Cambodia has provided more opportunity of regional accessibility and cross border tourism. If considering in the context of Vietnam tourism development, Vietnam has manifestly pushed huge efforts in development with the expectation to being the leader in tourism industry of the region. Though Vietnam has announced the economic reform, it is interesting to note that Vietnam still strictly controls the trade and economic development by establishing rules and regulations and administrative systems as well as independence in trade and aviation. Similar conclusions of the two studies indicate that lack of skilled manpower, insufficient tourism facilities, lack of funding to improve the infrastructure and lack of strong support from governments have seriously affected the development of tourism in each country.

5.1.3. Tourism product development and marketing

5.1.3.1. Opinion on the image positioning of Vietnam tourism

Different points of view on the existing image position of Vietnam tourism have been expressed. Some considered that the existing image position is different from the ASEAN neighboring countries while some confirmed that the concurrent tourism image position is similar to other regional countries. All respondents strongly affirmed that the beauty of nature could be used as a symbol for promoting Vietnam tourism at the highest level and the identification of cultural and heritage prosperity could also be

employed to promote tourism at the high level. The respondents responded that the natural and cultural tourism activity extensively influences visitors to visit this country. Then, this type of tourism is the most appropriate influential promotional theme of tourism products in Vietnam. Additionally, the historic-cultural tourism could also be used as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to Vietnam.

If analyzing a product portfolio of Vietnam, the key products or offerings currently presented to the market could be generally identified as consisting of cultural and scenic offerings. It is obviously seen that this result is somewhat relevant with the study accomplished by Dr. Tirasatayapitak (2005). She measured the data using a 5-point ranking scale. She ranked the beauty of natural attractions as the most noteworthy factor (mean= 4.26) that appeal to visitors at the highest level, followed by art, architecture and culture (mean= 3.87) that also highly influence tourist's desire to travel to Vietnam. Tourists can pleasantly appreciate the beautiful green nature in most areas of Vietnam. When comparing the results of the study with the content analysis of tourism development plans, it is interesting to find out that the image of tourism in Vietnam still captures on the outline of nature beauty and cultural identity.

5.1.3.2. Opinion on the image positioning of Cambodia tourism

Regarding to the results of the study, there are as expected similarities in expressed opinions among respondents. The respondents strongly agree that the existing image position of tourism in Cambodia is similar to the ASEAN neighbouring countries. It can discuss that the similar point of view on this matter possibly relates to similar tourism resources offered, comparable stereotype of tourism products that generally comprise natural, historical and cultural attractions, local culture and the ways of life, native customs, and religious rituals as the key ingredients of package tours.

All respondents do believe that cultural and heritage prosperity could be used as a symbol for promoting Cambodia tourism at the highest level, followed by the beauty of nature at a high level. The cultural and heritage tourism is highly supported as the most appropriate promotional theme of tourism products in Cambodia. Additionally, the natural and cultural tourism activity could also be used as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to this country. If analyzing the major tour programs offering in the marketplace, the key products of Cambodia tourism could be viewed as consisting of cultural and architectural offerings. Tourists pay low interests in health tourism, sport and recreational tourism and shopping tourism. Eco-tourism and soft adventure fairly attract and challenge visitors who visit this country. This suggests that visitors still question about the convenience of tourist facilities and services related to these products and safety and security of sites in some areas. When planning to visit Cambodia, Angkor Wat seems to be the most important attraction that is a MUST to visit once in lifetime.

Though Cambodia possesses the beautiful coasts, beaches and natural areas, these attractions have yet to be promoted to the markets. This could be the problem of market acceptance at the early stage in terms of accessibility and security. Subsequently, the image of the special interest tourism seems to be crucially preserved as a dominant scene for tourism development in Cambodia due to the legacy of Angkor Wat. This result supports the study of Tirasatayapitak (2005), which mentioned that tourists are primarily appealed to Cambodia due to the charm of historical and archeological sites (mean = 4.39). Art, architecture and culture of the Khmer's civilization (mean = 4.17) also play as the factors to appeal tourists to the country at a high level. If compare the results of the two studies on factor or brand image that appeals tourists to visit Cambodia with tourist activities which influence tourists to experience and use services of this state, the cultural and heritage prosperity dominantly shows its priority and potential as a valuable message from this glorious region in the tourists' perception for decades when they first decide on activity.

5.1.4. Threats and problems to collaborative networks between Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia

To strengthen the importance of tourism product development and destination marketing among ASEAN countries toward the cooperative activities and research, the key informants confirmed that they do not previously have any experience to conduct cooperative activities with Thai researchers because of some several reasons such as the complicatedness in establishing the bilateral or multilateral collaborative networks between researchers and tourism business sectors, insufficient support from governments and problem of bureaucracy in coordination with the government bodies, lack of meeting and understanding between the researchers of two countries such as Thailand- Vietnam or Thailand- Cambodia and vice versa and also between Thai researchers with business sectors all countries, inequitable shares of funding and grants between Thai researchers and copartners and lack of statistician system and updated tourism data pool of information.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. Tourism product development and destination marketing in Vietnam and Cambodia

Tourism business in Vietnam and Cambodia has gradually experienced the positive progress in terms of development. However, the proper image positioning of tourism and precise theme of tourism products in each country are not clearly defined and promoted. This will cause the high extent of business competition due to standardization and likeness of tourism products and tourism image positioning offered to the potential tourists. To achieve quality tourism and enhance the global image of ASEAN tourism as one single destination with many-sided tourism characteristics available to specific interests of tourists to experience during their precious vacation, the

following processes could be undertaken to harmonize the mutual benefits in tourism for all countries.

1. The development of tourism product lines should be designed and developed in regard to the niche potential characteristics of tourism resources in each country in order to highlight the state identity and tourism competitiveness. It is important to realize that all ASEAN countries should not develop tourism in a way to promote themselves as cocktail destination.

2. Currently, the problems of tourism image, security, safety, basic infrastructure, accessibility to tourist attractions, shortage of skillful manpower and funding and poor services are weakness noteworthy for tourism in Vietnam and Cambodia. Clustering of tourist attractions will help the country to share the resources pool when designing tour programs and itineraries, encourage development of infrastructure, tourism facilities and human resources and increase the attractiveness of each destination and make the whole tour a significant and unique experience to visitors. In addition, the environment in tourist attractions has to be improved. The authenticity and sense of place should be enhanced.

3. There is an immediate need to carry out a complete inventory and assessment of the tourism resources both nature and culture in each country to identify those resources of significance that may or may not be developed for tourism and collect reliable information on present and potential tourist attractions to better consider in the process of planning and developing tourism activities and products.

4. Countries involved should promote two side tourist products as a destination. The development of tourism products in Vietnam and Cambodia should promote combined attractions with priority on high marketing potential, convenient accessibility and safety.

5. Governments concerned should establish the collaborative tourism development plan and the bilateral cooperation to promoting tourism products and image as a unique destination.

6. Vietnam and Cambodia should endeavor to maintain their unique nature, culture, heritage and way of life and avoid to reproducing tourism products in neighboring countries.

5.2.2. Measures to boost up the collaborative networks between Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia

To promote the more effective collaborative networks between Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia through cooperation and research in tourism marketing, destination branding and other tourism related fields, it is very important to give more opportunity to poorer countries to develop their tourism in order to lessen the problems of disparity and conflicts of interests shared. The following measures could be implemented to better enhance and boost up the relationships among all parties involved.

1. Trust and sincerity in mechanism for regional cooperation are required. Proper agreements among Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia should be sincerely developed to harmonize the atmosphere of tourism development in the region. The agreement on the copyright and mutual benefits should be discussed based on the willingness to support, respect and help each other

2. Governments have to strengthen the assistance, coordination and management of agreements both bilateral and multilateral for tourism cooperation.

3. An active mechanism for cooperation between authorities and the researchers on tourism of the ASEAN region should be strongly encouraged. It is very necessary to call for more serious involvement from the tourism business sectors in the meetings.

4. Support for more active activities, new efficient roles and contribution from the ASEAN and Thailand Research Funds are decisively required and urged, for instance, to establish the collaborative center of Thailand and Vietnam and Thailand and Cambodia, to periodically exchange experience, information and knowledge on tourism

development and related fields and to collaborate in market research, emphasizing upon international target market.

5. More marketing activities and research training among Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia should be regularly arranged in order to help each other transfer experiences in tourism marketing and promotion.

6. There should be exchanges of the study results of the research projects among Thai researchers and tourism business sectors in Vietnam and Cambodia. This would help strengthen more enthusiastic contribution from all parties in collaborative networks.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS WHO ATTENDED THE FOCUS GROUP
MEETING IN HANOI, VIETNAM

**LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS WHO ATTENDED THE FOCUS GROUP
MEETING IN HANOI, VIETNAM**

The participants who attended the Focus Group Meeting comprised of the representatives from the following organizations.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Huong | Deputy Director of Tourism Promotion Board
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism |
| 2. Mr. Nguyen Van Binh | Head of General Division
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism |
| 3. Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Binh | Head of Travel Business Management
Department
Hanoi Administration of Tourism |
| 4. Mrs. Do Thi Thanh Hoa | Deputy Head of International Cooperation
Department
Institute for Tourism Development Research |
| 5. Mr. La Xuan Hien | Director Hanoi Office
Vietnamtourism in Ho Chi Minh City |
| 6. Mr. Troung Nam Thang | General Manager Hanoi
OSC Travel (S.M.I. Group) Co.,Ltd |
| 7. Dr. Therdchai Choibamroong | Researcher Manager
Area-Based Tourism Research Center for
Sustainable Tourism Development, The Thailand
Research Fund |
| 8. Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak | Researcher
Faculty of Service Industries, Prince of Songkla
University |

APPENDIX B

PICTURES OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING IN HANOI, VIETNAM



PICTURES OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING IN HANOI, VIETNAM

APPENDIX C

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS WHO ATTENDED THE FOCUS GROUP
MEETING IN PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

**LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS WHO ATTENDED THE FOCUS GROUP
MEETING IN PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA**

The participants who attended the Focus Group Meeting comprised of the representatives from the following organizations.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Mr. In Thoeun | Director of International Cooperation and
ASEAN Department
Ministry of Tourism |
| 2. Mr. Pea Pheap | Deputy Chief of Marketing Office
Marketing and Promotion Department
Ministry of Tourism |
| 3. Mr. Hoy Dhireak | Deputy Director of International Cooperation
and ASEAN Department
Ministry of Tourism |
| 4. Mr. Chraloeng Somethea | Deputy Director
Ministry of Tourism |
| 5. Mr. Ho Vandy | President of Cambodia Association of Travel
Agents |
| 6. Dr. Therdchai Choibamroong | Researcher Manager
Area-Based Tourism Research Center for
Sustainable Tourism Development, The
Thailand Research Fund |
| 7. Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak | Researcher
Faculty Of Service Industries, Prince of
Songkla University |

APPENDIX D

PICTURES OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING IN PHNOM PENH,
CAMBODIA



PICTURES OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING IN PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

APPENDIX E

STRUCTURE INTERVIEW FOR ACADEMIC FOCUS-GROUP MEETING
(PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TOURISM RELATED INSTITUTION IN VIETNAM)



Focus Group Meeting
For
Academic Research sponsored by Thailand Research Fund

ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia

Clarification: After the formalization of ASEAN cooperation in tourism in 1976, tourism in this region has developed rapidly since 1980. The member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) have well recognized the importance of tourism as an activity for the movement of goods and people, trade and business investment, human resource development and the raising of living standards.

Since the tourism management, planning and development strategies in Vietnam, Cambodia and other member countries of ASEAN are focused primarily towards marketing and guest emphasized tactics (Choibamroong, 2005), the ASEAN tourism is critical in terms of tourism authenticity and loss of destination identity. It is worthy to note that Vietnam and Cambodia offer similar tourism resources and comparable stereotype of tourism products. As a consequence, this results a similar tourism image positioning in marketing scheme in the tourists' perceptions for these two countries.

This focus group meeting is designed for academic research. The aim is to study and investigate the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia towards the SWOT analysis. The information from the meeting will be used as primary data in proposing the image position for Vietnam and Cambodia. The results of study from this research will be used to create the data bank in tourism among the ASEAN countries.

The contributions provided by respondents in this meeting will have absolutely no negative impact on these individuals. Your assistance is critical to the advancement of the study and the researcher is extremely grateful for your assistance.

Definitions of terms:

Destination image is a distinctive message of mental impression or perceptions of a place, a product and experience with the destination. This is often a mixture of formation elements including attractions, scenery, hosts, cuisine, culture, peace, security and access.

Image positioning is what people think about or a perceptual position of any destination in people's minds. Image positioning depends on an understanding and attitude towards the destination. It can describe the market situation and set a destination differently apart from its competitors.

(Dr. Aree TIRASATAYAPITAK)

Researcher

Part 1: Opinions of SWOT analysis of the tourism development in Vietnam

1. Do you agree with the following proposed SWOT analysis of the tourism development in Vietnam? (Please mark (/) one box only).

() No

() Yes

Potential internal strengths

1. Vietnam possesses the unique physical and social characteristics as well as culture that greatly provide the variable diversity of tourism resources. The tourism potential of Vietnam is very wealthy in nature and humanity. From a cultural perspective, Vietnam offers rich historical sites, architectural monuments, French colonial architecture, Indo-Chinese cultural heritage and war memorial. These resources are spreading in all regions of the country. Vietnam has a bundle of attractions to offer ranging from 64 historical attractions, 19 cultural sites and 23 natural attractions spanning across the country. All these 106 tourists attractions are mainly located in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Vang Tau, My Tho, Hue and Danang. Some attractions are well known at the worldwide scale as World Heritage Sites. In addition, Vietnam also has a large number of festivals and cultural events that appeal tourists to experience these events.

2. There are many pristine and untapped tourism resources in the boundary of country. The historical heritage of Vietnam is still largely unknown. These attractions could be developed to enlarge the product lines as alternative attention-grabbing projects to cater to niche markets.

3. According to a rich and valuable natural biodiversity and habitats, there is a high potential for development of eco-tourism, nature-based tourism and adventure tourism, for instance, the area of the Mekong Delta and the mountainous area in the central part of Vietnam. There is a noteworthy possibility for high growth rate of tourism development and expansion in these areas.

4. The combination of natural and cultural tourism resources forms a strong basis to develop unique tourism products and has the potential to make Vietnam an attractive destination in ASEAN for beach holidays and visiting natural, historical and cultural attractions.

5. The major tourist destinations in Vietnam have been developed and promoted as **“The Jewel of Mekong”** in various characteristics to serve the needs and interests of the target markets. These attractions hold high potential to be promoted as multi-tourism circuits linking with destinations in other member countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region such as Thailand, Laos and Cambodia:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| - Hanoi City | highlight characteristic: culture/ history |
| - Ninh Binh Province | highlight characteristic: culture/ history |
| - Halong Bay – Haiphong | highlight characteristic: nature |
| - Thua Thien - Hue | highlight characteristic: nature/ culture |
| - Quangnam - Danang | highlight characteristic: nature/ culture |

Vietnam furthermore offers the important cluster of attractions that are significant to complementarily promote the tourism network of attractions in the group of the Jewel of Mekong:

- High plateau in the central part: Dalat, Vontum, Ninh Thuan
- Mekong Delta: Metho, Bentre, Cantho
- Lao Cai (Border of China and Vietnam)

6. The Vietnamese people are warm and hospitable. They warmly welcome the visitors who visit their country with their traditional culture and friendship.

7. Vietnam has a stable policy and a high security. This significantly provides the impressive image to Vietnam as the safe tourism destination for visiting.

8. Vietnam has collaborated in the Mekong/ Lancang River tourism infrastructure development project. This helps Vietnam to strengthen the cooperation and tourism development with other GMS countries and will create a unique opportunity for country to be promoted as a part of the Mekong/ Lancang River destination.

9. Vietnam serves as the supplementary gateway to disperse tourists to countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. According to the well-located physical location for international communication of Vietnam, the government has good conditions for developing the transportation networks by airways, road, rail and sea linking with other countries in the region and the world.

10. Vietnam is geographically located adjacent to the growing tourism markets such as Asia-Pacific and the regional markets of the Greater Mekong Sub-region where the expansion of economic terms is very noteworthy and people in the region have more purchasing power. Then, Vietnam could advantage from this condition to offering the competitive product prices and cater the tourists for the all year round.

11. The renovation and open door policy have stimulated the economic growth, favorable conditions for foreign economic relations and the great potentials in development of the whole country. Vietnam concurrently develops the accommodation facilities, upgrades the infrastructure and leisure complexes in the major tourist areas of country.

12. The economic, quality of living standards and social infrastructure of Vietnam have been gradually upgraded. These advantages reinforce the complimentary conditions of the exploitation of tourism potentials, development of tourism attractions and touring circuits and promote higher demand in domestic tourism.

13. Regarding to a stable and supportive government, Vietnam has set up the foundation to create a new foreign trade system such as the banking system and liberalizing foreign exchange that would augment the number of trading companies and fast economic growth. Many legal documents relating to tourism have been issued and supplemented as Business Law, Law on Foreign Investment in Vietnam that create the healthier environment and a legal corridor for tourism development.

14. Vietnam has revised the Foreign Investment Law which provides high opportunities for joint ventures between the foreigners and local partners in the tourism industry.

15. The Vietnam government determined tourism as the spearhead economic sector in national industrialization. The government has paid much attention in leading the tourism development of the country. As such, the National Administration of Tourism has launched succession of promotion in various key markets in the world that help intensify the perceptive understanding of Vietnam by the world and result in the increasing number of tourists.

16. Vietnam has paid attention to preserving the natural and cultural resources of the country towards the close cooperation with Ministries and local governments to establish the master plans for tourism development.

17. The Vietnam government has paid serious awareness to the development of human resources for the tourism industry in terms of training content and system specialized in tourism from vocational to a high level of education. As a consequence, Vietnam labor force has a high level of literacy. The labor force in Vietnam is a great resource to tourism industry development.

18. Vietnam has applied bilateral visas exemption to facilitate the travel for citizens from six ASEAN countries, namely Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Singapore. This contributes positively to rapid growth rate of international arrivals to the country.

Potential internal weaknesses

1. Exploitation of tourism resources depends mainly on the natural resources which are pristine. The experience of business operation management and professional skills of the officials are still limited. Not many tourism development projects in key attractions have been carried out an environmental impact assessment. Then, there is a high risk of damaging natural ecosystem and resources of the area. The conservation and development of resources and environmental protection are still inadequate which seriously affects the achievement of sustainable development.

2. Tourism resources and environment are despoiled due to the improper exploitation and increasing impacts by natural disasters which have been occurring in many areas of the country.

3. There is a lack of simultaneous planning, strict control for exploiting coastal and sea resources. This causes many damages to the environment of the coastal areas. Vietnam

is facing the barrier of limited effectiveness of management in terms of the use of tourism resources and cooperation in developing tourism products.

4. The current large scale of marine tourism environment is very easy to be destroyed by modern development process and the impact of human activities. The high density of tourists, concentrated in only few resorts has created an unacceptable stress, which can destroy the natural value of the area (www.vub.ac.be).

5. The country has very little environmental regulations implementing in some important areas, such as Halong-Cat Ba, Hue-Danang, Nha Trang and Vung Tau, which consequences in serious damages caused by other economic activities, insufficient protection of the public interest and the environment. It is very risk that Vietnam would face the same environmental problems as occurred in Thailand if the government does not protect the natural resources now. The environmental problem may harm the tourism industry in the long term.

6. Vietnam is appealing to follow Thailand's fast-track tourism development model. It will be quite difficult to control the rapid expansion of the national tourism industry since there is insufficient appropriate tourism management expertise in Vietnam.

7. The development of accommodation facilities is very fast. The number of hotel capacities is over-exceeding than the tourists' demand.

8. The replacement of international landscape could be widely seen in most major tourist destinations of Vietnam.

9. Vietnam does not have adequate financial resources to develop basic infrastructure which can meet the requirement of economic development and tourism development

such as the accessibility, communication system and development of tourism circuits and attractions in the mountainous, islands and remote areas.

10. The transportation connections are not very convenient and low in frequency. Additionally, inaccessibility could be affected from the difficulty of frontier formalities and the rigid customs.

11. Socio-economic development levels and residents' living standard in Vietnam are still low which affect the supply and demand relationship for tourism development.

12. Social awareness on tourism is still insufficient. The low participation from local communities and local officials, especially in the decision-making on tourism planning, activities and controlling the areas is very critical. There is a lack of tourism training and education plans for local people.

13. While the current practice of Vietnam's tourism is positive, the burdensome levels of bureaucracy and various unnecessary regulations interfere the market activities and play critical roles as obstacles to tourism growth. The tourism related agents are obstructed with national politics and bureaucracy. Vietnam still individually strictly controls the trade and economic development within the country by establishing rules and regulations and administrative system.

14. Corruption in certain segments of public and private sectors remains uncontrolled although the government pushes efforts to eliminate this problem.

15. Vietnam implements the process of enacting the necessary laws and decrees in the legal system such as contracting, banking system, property rights and foreign investment laws. The existing difficulty is mainly caused by uncertainty and

inconsistency in interpreting the laws. Different authorities put policies into practice according to their own interpretations, which make foreign investors confused.

16. The majority of firms in Vietnam are the state-owned company. Most state-owned properties exist as independent units. This often causes many problems in business operations such as the funding, the separation of the firm management and ownership that would lead to poor supervising of the State resources.

17. There are no investment codes specific for tourism. The investor encounters the financial risk of high upfront cost with longer payback period, especially for the hotel projects.

18. There are insufficient conditions for small and medium enterprises in order to activate all resources for tourism development and disperse mutual benefits to the communities.

19. Tourism infrastructure, especially airports and seaports which can be international gateways and serve the tourist flows from countries in the region have yet to meet the development requirement.

20. The tourism attractions has not been competently presented and integrated into the tourism markets.

21. Vietnam is facing the shortage of highly trained and qualified persons who can carry out well the cooperative marketing. The number of competitive tourism products is still limited. Marketing and promotion and branding have yet to meet the demand of the present prospective markets.

22. Service in Vietnam is still poor. The pricing system is still critical and lacks of standards. It will degrade the overall quality of service standards and competencies to carry on Vietnam's competitiveness among destinations in the region.

23. There is a lack of professional labor force in serving the tourism industry. The turnover rate of employees in the industry is high.

Potential external opportunities

1. The effective collaboration on tourism development among countries in the region will be the significant opportunity for mutual tourism development to create the multi-tourism circuits and expand the product lines.

2. The growth rate of tourism development in the region is high. Hence, there is a high possibility to exchange tourist flows with other member countries and integrate in the regional development policy as a partner of single tourist destination.

3. The US Foreign Commercial Service of the American Embassy in Singapore regularly published information about hotel and resort projects in Vietnam that are seeking foreign joint-venture partners. This helps enhance the opportunity for looking for potential foreign business partners to collaborate in tourism development (www.scholar.lib.vt.edu, 2006).

4. The assistance of World Tourism organization, ASIANTA, PATA and the technical assistance projects by EU help provide the training for human resource development.

5. The peaceful atmosphere in the region enhances the potential opportunity for investment in tourism.

6. The development of basic infrastructure and facilities throughout the ASEAN region contributes the dispersion of tourism growth.

7. Globalization, peace, cooperation and development in technology rapidly develop the world tourism, which illustrates the tourist demand toward South East Asia and Pacific. This is the good opportunity for Vietnam tourism to be developed.

8. The overall commitment to a sub-regional tourism development agenda among six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region remains strong.

9. The strategy to develop and promote the priority tourism zones and touring circuits along the Mekong River that contains most of the sub-region's major tourism resources has the potential to make a substantial contribution to mutual sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

10. Promoting the Greater Mekong Sub-region as single destination based on a bundle of cultural and natural products will hearten a sense of mission among stakeholders in all countries concerned to partake in sub-regional tourism promotion and development activities.

Potential external threats

1. The development of basic infrastructure such as road connections in the region takes too long time.

2. The difficulty in empowering the investment from the regional economic system in the development affects from the disparity of development of monetary and banking system in each country.
3. The market segmentation, positioning and branding practices of the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region are not clearly defined. The marketing capabilities of most GMS national tourism organizations are limited in terms of the weak destination marketing management, capacities and lack of adequate funding.
4. The balance between economic development and environmental degradation is going to be crucial. The inability to implement sustainable development principles and practices at the natural and cultural resource management level and at the community level may cause the potentially adverse environmental impacts.
5. The conflict of interests in sharing tourism resources pool among member countries in the region may be a result of incorrect assumption that the tourists going to another country are actually tourists who would come to their own country.
6. The effective pro-poor tourism development principles and practices as well as the assurance that all stakeholders in the regional tourism system are engaged in the process to maximize the commitment are still not applied.
7. The tourism industry's contribution to poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development is restricted and the reimbursement is disproportionately distributed all through the Greater Mekong Sub-region.
8. The competition between the destinations all over the world is increasingly serious since these countries aim at tourism as a means to boost the economic mechanism and

retain the existing shares in the markets. Then, the search for new potential buyers is becoming powerful.

9. The energy shortage may cause the high cost in investment and tourism business operation.

10. The crucial difference in standard quality of products, services and prices greatly affects the tourists' satisfaction.

Recommendations:.....
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Part 2: Opinions of tourism development and destination marketing

1. How is the existing image position of Vietnam tourism?
() Different from the ASEAN neighboring countries (Please go to Question 2)
() Similar to the ASEAN neighboring countries

2. Please rate 1,2,3,4 or 5 for each following aspect. (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = a neutral midpoint, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree).

Aspects	Assessed Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
<p>2.1. Elements could be used as a symbol for promoting tourism in Vietnam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beauty of nature - Fertileness of ecological system - Ways of life - Cultural and heritage prosperity - Long trace of history - Works of art 					
<p>2.2. The most appropriate promotional theme of tourism products in Vietnam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cultural tourism -Cultural and heritage tourism - Natural and cultural tourism -Historic-cultural tourism -Historical tourism -Ethno-tourism -Nature-based tourism -Beach resort tourism -Eco-tourism -Soft adventure tourism -Health tourism -Shopping tourism -Sport and recreational tourism 					

3. In regard with the recommended promotional theme in Question 2.2, what attractions do they have potential in being developed for tourism to serve up such theme?

3.1: The presented attractions

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3.2: The new attractions

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Part 3: Opinions of the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam

1. What are threats and problems of the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam?

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2. What measures could be undertaken to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam?

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THANK YOU

APPENDIX F
STRUCTURE INTERVIEW IN VIETNAMESE FOR ACADEMIC FOCUS-
GROUP MEETING
(PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TOURISM RELATED INSTITUTION IN VIETNAM)

Cuéc hăp chuy^an gia
dựnh cho phçn nghi^an cøu lý thuyỐt do Quũ Nghi^an Cøu
Th,i Lan tui trı

**§Pnh vP hxn h ¼nh ASEAN: Tr-êng híp cĩa ViỐt Nam vư Cam-
 pu-chia.**

§Ăt vĒn Ồ: Sau khi chÝnh thøc ho, híp t,c du lPch ASEAN vưo n"m 1976, du lPch trong khu vùc ồ. t"ng tr-êng nhanh chăng kỐ tồ n"m 1980. Thựnh vi^an c,c n-íc §«ng Nam , ồ. nhĒn thøc rĒt rā tçm quan trăng cĩa du lPch nh- lư mét ho^t ồéng cho sù dPch chuyỐn cĩa hựng ho, vư con ng-êi, th--ng mⁱ vư ồçu t- kinh doanh, ph,t triỐn nguăn nhøn lùc vư t"ng ti^au chuĒn sêng.

Khi c- quan qu¼n lý du lPch, chiỐn l-íc quy ho^tch vư ph,t triỐn du lPch ẽ ViỐt Nam, Cam-pu-chia vư c,c n-íc thựnh vi^an ASEAN tĒp trung tr-íc hốt vưo chiỐn thuĒt tiỐp thP vư thu hót kh,ch hựng (Choibamroong, 2005), nguyh Du lPch ASEAN r-i vưo t-xnh tr'ng nguy hiỐm do viỐc mĒt ồi tÝnh x,c thùc cĩa du lPch vư tÝnh ồăng nhĒt cĩa ồiỐm Ồn. §iĐu ồ,ng chó ý lư ViỐt Nam vư Cam-pu-chia cũng ồ-a ra nh÷ng nguăn tui nguy^an du lPch vư s¼n phĒm du lPch t--ng ồèi giềng nhau. KỐt qu¼ lư, ồPnh vP hxn h ¼nh du lPch trong kỐ ho^tch t'io dừng nhĒn thøc cĩa kh,ch du lPch vồ 2 quēc gia nư lư giềng nhau.

Cuéc hăp chuy^an gia nư ồ-íc thiỐt kỐ dựnh cho phçn nghi^an cøu lý thuyỐt vıi mōc ồÝch hăc hái, nghi^an cøu t-xnh hxn h ph,t triỐn du lPch hiỐn t'ı cĩa ViỐt Nam vư Cam-pu-chia theo h-íng phøn tÝch c«ng thøc SWOT. Nh÷ng th«ng tin nư sĒ ồ-íc sồ dōng nh- nguăn d÷ liĐu chÝnh trong viỐc ồĐ xuĒt ồPnh vP hxn h ¼nh cho ViỐt Nam vư Cam-pu-chia. KỐt qu¼ cĩa cuéc nghi^an cøu sĒ ồ-íc sồ dōng ồÓ xOy dừng c- sĒ d÷ liĐu vồ du lPch gi÷a c,c n-íc thựnh vi^an ASEAN.

Nh÷ng ồăng găp cĩa nh÷ng ng-êi tr¼ lĒi phăng vĒn trong cuéc hăp chuy^an gia sĒ hōm tōn kh«ng ¼nh h-êng Ồn c, nhøn hă. Sù trı giỐp cĩa b¹n cā tÝnh quyỐt ồPnh tıi sù

tiễn bé của cuộc nghiên cứu. Xin chon thuận cảm ơn và
trí giúp của bạn.

§Phn nghĩa c,c thuật ngữ:

Hxnh qnh của @ióm @õn là mét th<ng @iöp @Æc biôt của sù
Ên t-îng hay sù am hiôu vò mét @ióm @õn, mét s¶n ph¶m vụ
sù tr¶i nghiôm vói @ióm @õn @ã. Nã th-êng lụ sù kôt híp
của c,c yôu tè @Æc thì bao gảm sù hÊp dÊn, phong c¶nh
@Ñp, ng-êi tiöp @ãn, Êm thùc, v"n ho,, sù thanh bxnh, sù
an toan vụ kh¶ n"ng tiöp cÊn @ióm @õn.

§Phn vP hxnh qnh là mãi ng-êi nghũ gx hay cảm gi,c vò vP
trÝ của tống @ióm @õn trong trÝ ãc của hà nh- thõ nưo.
§Phn vP hxnh qnh phô thúc vưo th,i @é vụ sù hiôu biôt vò
c,c @ióm @õn. Nã cũ thố mi"u t¶ txnh hxnh thP tr-êng vụ
t'ò cho @ióm @õn sù kh,c biôt so vói @èi thñ c'nh tranh.

(Dr. Aree TIRASATAYAPITAK)

Nhụ nghiên cứu

**§Þnh vÞ h×nh ¶nh ASEAN: Tr-êng híp cña ViÖt Nam vù
Cam-pu-chia**

**PhÇn 1: Nh÷ng quan @iÓm vÒ b¶n ph©n tÝch §iÓm m¹nh - §iÓm
yÕu - C- hi - HiÓm ho¹ @i vi sù ph,t triÓn cña Du lÞch
ViÖt Nam.**

1. B¹n c @ng ý vi nh÷ng quan @iÓm trong b¶n ph©n
tÝch SWOT @i vi sù ph,t triÓn cña Du lÞch ViÖt Nam
kh«ng? (Xin vui lÞng @,nh ®u vùo mét « trng d-íi
@y)

- () Kh«ng
() C

§iÓm m¹nh

1. ViÖt Nam s h÷u mét ngun du lÞch phong phó vi
nh÷ng @c @iÓm ni bt vÒ tù nhin vn ho, vù x-
hi. ViÖt Nam rt giúu tiÒm nng vÒ tù nhin vù con
ng-i. VÒ mt vn ho,, ViÖt Nam c rt nhiÒu c,c
@iÓm tham quan lÞch s, c,c c«ng tr×nh kiÕn tróc kù
niÒm, kiÕn tróc Ph,p c, di s¶n vn ho, §«ng D-ng
vù c,c chng tÝch chiÕn tranh. C,c c«ng tr×nh nù
n»m tr¶i dui trn ton bé l.nh th ViÖt Nam. ViÖt
Nam c cm c,c @iÓm tham quan hp dn bao gm 64
@iÓm thm quan lÞch s, 19 @iÓm thm quan vn ho, vù
23 @iÓm thm quan tù nhin, tp trung chñ yÕu  Hù
ni, Thùnh ph H ChÝ Minh, Vng Tùu, Mù Tho, Hu,
§ù Nng. Mét vù @iÓm thm quan @. @-íc UNESCO c«ng
nhn lù di s¶n vn ho, th gii. H-n na, ViÖt Nam
c mét s l-ng ln c,c lô hi, sù kiÕn vn ho, thu
ht du kh,ch.

2. ViÖt Nam c rt nhiÒu ngun ti nguyn hoang s- ch-a
@-íc khai th,c  c,c vng bin gii cña @t n-íc.
C,c di s¶n vÒ lÞch s cña ViÖt Nam cng ch-a @-íc
bit @n nhiÒu. Nh÷ng @iÓm hp dn nù cÇn @-íc ph,t
triÓn @ lùm phong phó thm cho dng s¶n phm du
lÞch, bin n tr thùnh nh÷ng @iÓm thm quan thay
th phc v cho th tr-êng ng,ch.

3. Dùa vùo sù phong phó, @a dng c gi, trÞ cña h sinh
th,i tù nhin & ng-i dn b¶n @a, ViÖt Nam c tiÒm

n"ng Ớ ph,t tri"n du l"ch sinh th,i, du l"ch thi^an nhi^an, du l"ch m'oi hi"m, v'y d"o nh- ẽ v"ng Ớng b»ng s«ng C"u Long, c,c v"ng n"i ph'ya B¼c Vi"t Nam. Ớy l"u kh" n"ng Ớng ch" y Ớ t" l" m" r"ng v" ph,t tri"n du l"ch t"ng tr-ẽng cao trong c,c khu v"u n"y.

4. S"u k"t h"p c"n" ngu"n du l"ch t"u nhi^an, v"n ho, t'oi n"n t"ng m'nh m" Ớ ph,t tri"n c,c s"n ph"m du l"ch Ớc Ớ. T" Ớ t'oi Ới"u ki"n Ớ Vi"t Nam tr" th"nh m"t Ới"m Ớn h"p d"n ẽ ASEAN v"i du l"ch ngh" bi"n, t"u nhi^an, l"ch s" v" v"n ho,.
5. C,c Ới"m tham quan du l"ch ch"nh c"n" Vi"t Nam Ớ-ic ph,t tri"n v" qu"ng b, nh- l"u "Vi^an Ớ, qu'y c"n" M^ k«ng" v"i nh»ng c,c Ớc Ới"m kh,c nhau ph"c v" cho nhu c"u v" s" th'y ch c"n" c,c th" tr-ẽng m"c ti^u. C,c Ới"m h"p d"n n"y chi"m gi÷ m"t ti"m n"ng l"n Ớ Ớ-ic qu"ng b, nh- l"u s" li^an k"t du l"ch gi÷a th"nh vi^an c,c n-ic ti"u v"ng s«ng M^ k«ng nh- Th,i Lan, L"o v"u Cam-pu-chia.

C,c Ớc Ới"m n"i tr"i:

- Th"nh ph" H" N"i: v"n ho,/l"ch s"
- T"nh Ninh B"nh: v"n ho,/l"ch s"
- V"nh H' Long/H"i Ph"ng: t"u nhi^an
- Th"i Thi^an Hu"i: t"u nhi^an/l"ch s"
- Qu"ng Nam-S" N"ng: t"u nhi^an/v"n ho,

H-n n"n, Vi"t Nam c"n" c" nh»ng c"m tham quan h"p d"n, trong Ớ c" y ngh"i Ớ x"c ti"n th"m cho m'ng l-i"i du l"ch trong nh"m c"n" "Vi^an Ớ, qu'y c"n" M^ k«ng":

- Cao nguy^an c"n" v"ng mi"n Trung: S" L't, Kon Tum, Ninh Thu"n
- V"ng Ớng b»ng s«ng M^ K«ng: M" Tho, B"n Tre, C"n Th-.
- L"o Cai (bi^an gi"i Vi"t Nam-Trung Qu"c)

6. Con ng-ẽi Vi"t Nam r"t th"n thi"n v" hi"u kh,ch. H" ch"u Ớn kh,ch du l"ch b»ng t"t c" s" n"ng nhi"t, s" th"n thi"n c"n" n"n v"n ho, truy"n th"ng.
7. Vi"t Nam c" m"t n"n ch"nh tr" æn Ớnh & an to"n cao. Ới"u n"y c" y ngh"i trong vi"c t'oi cho Vi"t Nam m"t h"nh "nh Ớn t-ing nh- l"u m"t Ới"m Ớn an to"n.

8. Việt Nam ®· híp t,c vúi dù ,n ph,t trión c- sẽ h¹ tÇng du lÞch s«ng M^a k«ng/Lancang. Dù ,n nuy gióp Việt Nam ®Ëy m¹nh sù li^an kỐt, ph,t trión du lÞch m¹nh h-n vúi c,c n-íc tióu vïng s«ng M^a K«ng vụ sĩ t¹o n^an mét c- héi duy nhÊt ®Ó qu¶ng b, Việt Nam nh-lụ mét trong nh÷ng ®ióm ®Õn cña s«ng M^a k«ng/Lancang.
9. Việt Nam lụ mét cõa ngâ phô ®Ó ph©n t,n kh,ch du lÞch tíi c,c n-íc tióu vïng s«ng M^a K«ng.Vúi mét vÞ trÝ ®Pa lý thuËn lîi trong giao l-u th«ng tin quèc tÕ, ChÝnh phñ Việt Nam cũ ®iðu kiõn tèt ®Ó ph,t trión m¹ng l-íi giao th«ng b»ng ®-êng hụng kh«ng, ®-êng bé, xe lĩa, ®-êng bión vúi c,c n-íc trong khu vùc vụ tr^an thõ giúi.
10. VÞ trÝ ®Pa lý cũa Việt Nam n»m liòn kờ vúi nh÷ng thÞ tr-êng ®ang ph,t trión du lÞch nh- Chõu , Thi Bxnh D-÷ng vụ c,c n-íc tióu vïng s«ng M^a K«ng n-i mụ sù ph,t trión vô ®iðu kiõn kinh tÕ lụ ®,ng chó ý công nh- sọc mua cũa nh÷ng ng-êi d©n ẽ vïng nuy th-êng cao h-n. Do ®ã, Việt Nam cũ lîi thõ trong viõc chụo nh÷ng s¶n phÈm cũ gi, cũnh tranh vụ phõc vô kh,ch du lÞch trong c¶ nãm.
11. ChÝnh s,ch mẽ cõa vụ ®æi míi, c,c ®iðu kiõn thuËn lîi cho sù giao th-÷ng vúi n-íc ngoi, nh÷ng tiòm n»ng m¹nh mẽ ®Ó ph,t trión tr^an toun ®Êt n-íc ®· khuyõn khÝch nõn kinh tÕ ph,t trión. Việt Nam ®áng thêi ph,t trión c,c c- sẽ l-u tró, nõng cÊp hỗ thêng c- sẽ h¹ tÇng vụ c,c khu giúi trÝ ẽ nh÷ng ®ióm du lÞch chÝnh cũa ®Êt n-íc.
12. Kinh tÕ, chÊt l-îng cũa ti^au chuÈn sêng, c- sẽ h¹ tÇng x· héi ẽ Việt Nam công dÇn ®-íc nõng cÊp. Sù thuËn lîi nuy cũng cè th^am c,c ®iðu kiõn ®Ó khai th,c tiòm n»ng du lÞch, ph,t trión c,c ®ióm du lÞch vụ lụm t»ng th^am nhu cÇu du lÞch néi ®Pa.
13. Cïng vúi mét chÝnh phñ lu«n ñng hé vụ æn ®Pnh, Việt Nam ®· xõy dùng ®-íc mét hỗ thêng míi vô th-÷ng m¹i n-íc ngoi nh- hỗ thêng nõn hụng, trao ®æi ngoi tÕ tù do. Do ®ã lụm t»ng l^an sẽ l-îng c,c c«ng ty th-÷ng m¹i vụ tèt ®é t»ng tr-êng kinh tÕ nhê ®ã công t»ng nhanh. RÊt nhiðu c,c tụi liõu li^an quan ®Õn Du lÞch ®· ®-íc ph,t hụng vụ bæ sung nh- LuËt

Kinh doanh, LuËt  Çu t- n-íc ngoàì t i Vi t Nam, t o n n mét m i tr- ng l nh m nh, c  h nh lang ph,p lý  Ó ph,t tri n du l ch.

14. Sau khi  . ch nh s a, LuËt  Çu t- n-íc ngoàì c a Vi t Nam  . t o nhi u c- h i cho c,c c ng ty li n doanh gi a ng- i n-íc ngoàì v  c,c   i t,c   Vi t Nam trong ng nh du l ch.
15. Ch nh ph  Vi t Nam  .   nh r  du l ch l  mét ng nh kinh t  m i nh n trong ng nh c ng nghi p qu c gia. Ch nh ph  d nh r t nhi u s  quan t m  Ó ph,t tri n du l ch trong c  n-íc. T ng C c Du L ch Vi t Nam  . ph,t   ng li n ti p c,c ch- ng tr nh qu ng b, t i nhi u th  tr- ng tr ng  i m tr n th  gi i nh m t ng c- ng s  nh n th c c a th  gi i v  Vi t Nam. K t qu  l  s  l- ng du kh,ch nguy c ng t ng.
16. Vi t Nam  . ch  ý trong vi c b o v  ngu n t i nguy n t  nhi n, v n ho, c a   t n-íc, h- ng t i s  li n k t ch t ch  gi a c,c B  v  ch nh quy n   a ph- ng  Ó thi t l p nh ng k  ho ch t ng th  trong ph,t tri n du l ch.
17. Ch nh ph  Vi t Nam d nh s  quan t m   c bi t trong vi c ph,t tri n ngu n nh n l c du l ch d- i d ng   o t o, h  th ng d nh ri ng cho du l ch t  h- ng nghi p   n   o t o chuy n s u. K t qu  l  l c l- ng lao   ng c a Vi t nam  . c  tr nh    cao v  tr  th nh ngu n l c l n trong ph,t tri n du l ch.
18. Vi t Nam  . th c hi n song ph- ng vi c mi n th  th c cho kh,ch du l ch c a s,u qu c gia   ng Nam , g m: Th,i Lan, Philippin, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Campuchia v  Singapore. S    ng g p t ch c c n y  .   y m nh l- ng kh,ch qu c t  v  Vi t Nam.

Si m y u

1. S  khai th,c c,c ngu n t i nguy n du l ch ph  th c ph n l n v o c,c ngu n t i nguy n t  nhi n ch-a  - c khai ph,. Kinh nghi m  i u h nh, qu n lý v  c,c k  n ng chuy n nghi p c a   i ng  l nh   o c n h n ch . R t  t c,c d  ,n ph,t tri n du l ch   mét s   i m tham quan ch nh  - c ti n h nh d- i s   ,nh gi, t,c

Đúng của dù, n tít m«i tr-êng. Do Òã, nguån tụi nguy^an vụ hồ sinh th,i từ nhi^an cũ nguy c- bP ph, huû ẽ mœc Òé kh, cao. Sù b¶o tãn, ph,t trión c,c nguån tụi nguy^an vụ b¶o võ m«i tr-êng vÊn ch-a t--ng xõng sÏ ¶nh h-êng nghi^am trãng tít nh÷ng thụn h c«ng cũa sù ph,t trión bôn v÷ng.

2. Nguån tụi nguy^an du lPch vụ m«i tr-êng Ò. bP ph, huû búi sù khai th,c kh«ng Òóng c,ch vụ thi^an tai x¶y ra nguy cụng nhiõu ẽ mét sè vÿng tr^an c¶ n-íc.
3. Thiõu c,c kõi ho¹ch Òàng bé, kióm so,t nghi^am ngÆt Òèi víi sù khai th,c nguån tụi nguy^an bión vụ vÿng ven bión. Viõt Nam Òang ph¶i Òèi mÆt víi nh÷ng rụo c¶n võ sù cũ giúi h¹n võ hiõu qu¶ qu¶n lý trong viõc sò dõng c,c nguån tụi nguy^an du lPch, li^an kõi ph,t trión s¶n phÈm du lPch.
4. Mét tũ lổ lín m«i tr-êng du lPch bión rÊt dõ bP tụn ph, búi sù ph,t trión cũa cuéc sèng hiõn Ò¹i vụ t,c Òéng cũa loúi ng-êi. MÈt Òé kh,ch du lPch duy ÒÆc tÈp trung chñ yõu ẽ mét vụi Òióm du lPch chÝnh cõng lụ mét nhõn tè ph, huû gi, trP từ nhi^an ẽ khu vùc (www.vub.ac.be)
5. Viõt Nam cũ rÊt Ýt nh÷ng quy Ò¶nh Ò-íc thùc thi võ m«i tr-êng ẽ mét sè Òióm Òõn quan trãng nh- H¹ Long-C,t Bụ, Huõ-sụ N÷ng; Nha Trang vụ Vòng Tụu, nh÷ng n-i bP ¶nh h-êng nÆng nõ búi c,c ho¹t Òéng kinh tõi, thiõu sù b¶o võ lúi Ých céng Òàng vụ m«i tr-êng. ThÈt nguy hióm khi biõt r»ng Viõt Nam cõng cũ thõ ph¶i Òèi mÆt víi nh÷ng vÊn Òõ võ m«i tr-êng nh- Ò. x¶y ra t--ng từ ẽ Thi Lan nõu chÝnh phñ kh«ng b¶o võ nguån tụi nguy^an từ nhi^an ngay tõi bõy giê. Nh÷ng vÊn Òõ võ m«i tr-êng cũ thõ kxm h.m nguyh c«ng nghiõp du lPch trong thêi gian dui.
6. Vietnam cũ xu h-íng Òi theo m« hxn ph,t trión qu, nhanh cũa du lPch Thailand. SÏ rÊt khã Òó kióm so,t sù ph,t trión qu, nhanh cũa nguyh c«ng nghiõp du lPch khi ch-a cũ nhiõu kinh nghiõm vụ n÷ng lúc qu¶n lý du lPch
7. Sù ph,t trión c,c c- sè l-u tró diõn ra qu, nhanh. Sè l-íng phßng kh,ch s¹n Òàng v-ít qu, nhu cÇu cũa kh,ch du lPch.

8. Sù thay thõ của c,c th¼ng c¶nh ÒÑp quèc tõi cũ thõ thêy ẽ hçu hõt c,c Òiõm tham quan chÝnh của Viõt Nam.
9. Viõt Nam ch-a cũ nguån tui chÝnh xõng Ò,ng Òó ph,t triõn c- sê h¹ tçng c- b¶n cho phĩ hĩp víi yªu cçu ph,t triõn vò kinh tõi, du l¶ch nh- kh¶ n¶ng tiõp cËn, hõ theng liªn l¹c, sù ph,t triõn của vßng quay du l¶ch vụ c,c Òiõm hêp dãn ẽ vïng nói, biõn Ò¶o vụ khu vùc hĩo l,nh.
10. M¹ng l-íi giao th¼ng ch-a thuËn tiõn vụ ch-a th¼ng suèt. Thªm vụo Òã, nh÷ng khã kh¶n trong viõc lùm thñ tõi h¶i quan t¹i biªn giúi cõng lùm ¶nh h-êng Òõn kh¶ n¶ng tiõp cËn Òiõm Òõn.
11. Møc Òé ph,t triõn vò kinh tõi-x. hêi cõng nh-møc seng tiªu chuËn của ng-êi dõn Viõt Nam ch-a cao nªn cõng ¶nh h-êng tii mèi quan hõ cung-cçu trong sù ph,t triõn du l¶ch.
12. NhËn thõc của x. hêi vò du l¶ch cßn ch-a Òçy Òñ. Sù tham gia của céng Òång & chÝnh quyõn Òõa ph-õng, Òõc biõt trong viõc quyõt Ò¶nh c,c ho¹t Òéng, kõi ho¹ch du l¶ch, kiõm so,t vïng vËn cßn b¶ phª ph,n. C,c kõi ho¹ch Òuo t¹o vụ gi,o dõc ng-êi dõn Òõa ph-õng cßn thiõu.
13. Trong khi t¼nh h¼nh thùc tiõn của du l¶ch Viõt nam Òang kh¶ quan th¼ møc Òé nghiªm trãng của quan liªu vụ nh÷ng thñ tõi phõc t¹p kh¼ng cçn thiõt kh,c Òang lùm ¶nh h-êng Òõn ho¹t Òéng của th¶ tr-êng vụ nã Òång vai trß nh- nh÷ng trẽ ng¹i trong viõc ph,t triõn du l¶ch. C,c Ò¹i lý du l¶ch løm vụo t¼nh tr¹ng bõ t¼c víi bé m,y quan liªu. Viõt Nam vËn Òang Òéc quyõn trong viõc kiõm so,t sù ph,t triõn kinh tõi, th-õng m¹i trong to¼n l.nh thæ b»ng c,çh thiõt lËp nh÷ng hõ theng hũnh chÝnh, c,c quy Ò¶nh vụ luËt lõ.
14. T¼nh h¼nh tham nhõng ẽ mét sê bé phËn vËn tiõp diõn kh¼ng thõ kiõm so,t mÆc dĩ chÝnh phñ Ò. ÒËy m¹nh mãi cè g¼ng Òó lo¹i trõ vËn Òõ nuy.
15. Viõt Nam bæ sung ban hũnh c,c bé luËt vụ ngh¶ Ò¶nh cçn thiõt trong hõ theng luËt ph,p nh- hĩp

đang, hỗ thêng ngôn húng, quyđn sẽ h+u tui sñn vụ luết @çu t- n-íc ngoui. Nh+ng khã kh"n cñn tãn t'i lụ do sù kh«ng ch¼c ch¼n vụ tr,i ng-íc nhau trong c«ng t,c phi^n đpch c,c bé luết. Nh+ng ng-êi cũ thêm quyđn kh,c nhau thi hính nh+ng chýnh s,ch luết theo bñn phi^n đpch cũa ri^ng hã khiđn c,c nhụ @çu t- n-íc ngoui bđ nhçm lén.

16. Phçn lín c,c c«ng ty ẽ Viđt Nam lụ c«ng ty nhụ n-íc vụ hçu hđt tui sñn cũa c,c c«ng ty nhụ n-íc tãn t'i nh- nh+ng c, thđ @-n lĩ. VÊN @đ nuy gçy ra kh, nhiđu phçc t'p trong viđc @iđu hính kinh doanh nh-nguån tui trĩ, sù phđn chia gi+a c«ng ty quñn lý vụ ng-êi chñ. Tđ @ã đén tĩ sù gi,m s,t c,c nguån lúc cũa @ết n-íc cñn kđm hiđu quñ.
17. Viđt Nam kh«ng cũ bé luết @çu t- dịnh ri^ng cho đư lđch. C,c nhụ @çu t- phñi @èi mæt vĩi sù rñi ro vđ tui chýnh khi phñi trñ chi phý cao tr-íc vụ giai @o^n trñ sau kđo dui, @Æc biđt lụ c,c đư ,n vđ kh,ch s'n.
18. Cñn thiđu c,c @iđu kiđn dịnh cho c,c doanh nghiđp vđa vụ nhã @đ xçy dđng c,c nguån lúc cho viđc ph,t triđn đư lđch vụ phđn phèi c,c lĩi ých chung tĩ céng @ang.
19. C- sẽ h' tçng đư lđch, @Æc biđt lụ sđn bay, bđn cñng cũ thđ trẽ thính cũa khêu quèc tđ vụ phçc vđ đđng kh,ch tđ c,c quèc gia @đn trong khu vùc nh-ng ch-a @,p òng @-íc nhu cçu ph,t triđn.
20. C,c @iđm đư lđch ch-a thùc sù @-íc giĩi thiđu vụ hụ nhđp mét c,ch thuyđt phçc vụo c,c thđ tr-êng đư lđch.
21. Viđt Nam @ang @èi mæt vĩi sù thiđu hđt nguån nhđn lúc @-íc @u t'đo vụ cũ chđt l-íng cao @đ cũ thđ lụm tèt c«ng t,c tiđp thđ. Sè l-íng c,c sñn phđm đư lđch mang týnh c'nh tranh cñn nhiđu h'n chđ. Tiđp thđ, quñng b, vụ xçy dđng th-^ng hiđu ch-a @,p òng @-íc nhu cçu c,c thđ tr-êng hiđn t'i vụ t-^ng lai.
22. Đpch vđ ẽ Viđt Nam cñn nghiđo nùn. Chýnh s,ch gi, ch-a cũ ti^u chũn lụm giñm tæng thđ chđt l-íng

cña ti^au chuÈn d^lch vô v^u kh[¶] n^{ng} c¹nh tranh cña ViÖt Nam so vⁱi c, c @iÖm @Ön trong khu v^uc.

23. ViÖt Nam c[¶]n thiÖu t[¶]ng líp lao @éng chuy^an nghiÖp phöc vô trong ng^unh du l[¶]ch. Tèc @é thay thÖ lao @éng trong ng^unh c[¶]n cao.

C- h^ei

1. Sù hⁱp t, c cã hiÖu qu[¶] trong ph, t triÖn du l[¶]ch gi^aa c, c quèc gia trong khu v^uc sⁱ l^u c- h^ei cã ý ngh^ua @Ö c[¶]ng nhau ph, t triÖn du l[¶]ch, t¹o ra mét v[¶]ng quay du l[¶]ch v^u m^e réng c, c d[¶]ng s[¶]n phÈm.
2. T^u lö t^{ng} tr-éng du l[¶]ch trong khu v^uc kh, cao. Do @ã, cã kh[¶] n^{ng} trong viÖc trao @æi c, c d[¶]ng kh, ch vⁱi c, c n-íc th^unh vi^an v^u k[¶]t hⁱp trong ch[¶]nh s, ch ph, t triÖn v[¶]ng nh- l^u mét @èi t, c cña c, c @iÖm @Ön @-n lí.
3. Ph[¶]ng Th--ng M¹i v^u D^lch vô cña §¹i Sö Qu, n M^u t¹i Singapore th-éng xuy^an c[¶]ng bè th[¶]ng tin dù , n kh, ch s[¶]n v^u khu nghö d-ìng t¹i ViÖt Nam @Ö t[¶]m kiÖm c, c @èi t, c li^an doanh n-íc ngo^ui. §iÖu n^uy l^um t^{ng} c- h^ei t[¶]m kiÖm, hⁱp t, c ph, t triÖn du l[¶]ch vⁱi c, c @èi t, c kinh doanh n-íc ngo^ui. (www.scholar.lib.vt.edu, 2006).
4. Sù h^e trⁱ cña Tæ chöc Du l[¶]ch ThÖ giⁱi, ASIANTA, PATA v^u c, c dù , n h^e trⁱ kü thu[¶]t, giöp @ì cña EU trong viÖc @µo t¹o v^u ph, t triÖn nguån nhö n lúc du l[¶]ch.
5. Kh[¶]ng kh[¶] h^u h^unh trong khu v^uc cöng l^um t^{ng} c, c c- h^ei @Çu t- du l[¶]ch tiÖm n^{ng}.
6. Sù ph, t triÖn cña c- s^e h¹ t[¶]ng c, c n-íc ASEAN @ãng gãp v^uo viÖc lan truyÖn sù t^{ng} tr-éng du l[¶]ch.
7. To[¶]n cÇu ho, , h^u h^unh, hⁱp t, c v^u ph, t triÖn kü thu[¶]t, du l[¶]ch thÖ giⁱi ph, t triÖn nhanh chãng @· minh hãa cho nhu cÇu kh, ch du l[¶]ch h-ìng vô §[¶]ng Nam , . §öy l^u c- h^ei t[¶]t @Ö du l[¶]ch ViÖt Nam ph, t triÖn.

8. Sù cam kốt toạu điỐn cĩa ch--ng tr×nh nghê sù vồ sù ph,t triỐn du lậch cĩa s,u n-íc trong vũng vển cởn cũ sọc m¹nh.
9. ChiỐn l-íc ph,t triỐn vụ qu¶ng b, c,c vũng du lậch -u ti^an vụ vểng quay du lậch đặc s«ng M^a K«ng, bao gảm hçu hốt c,c tụi nguy^an du lậch tiỐm n^{ing} chỷnh cĩa vũng t^o ra sù @ãng gấp quan trặng trong viỐc cing nhau ph,t triỐn bỒn v+ng vụ gi¶m bít @ãi nghồ.
10. Qu¶ng b, c,c n-íc tiỐu vũng s«ng M^a K«ng nh-lụ nh+ng @iỐm @Ồn @-n lĩ dừa tr^an nh+ng s¶n phỀm vồ vⁱⁿ ho,, tũ nhi^an sĩ cạ vồ ý thọc sỏ mỒnh cĩa c,c nhụ @çụ t- trong vũng quan tòm @Ó cing h-íng tíi ho^t @éng ph,t triỐn vụ qu¶ng b, du lậch trong vũng.

HiỐm ho¹

1. Sù ph,t triỐn cĩa c- sế h¹ tçng mỀt thêi gian qu, dụi vỷ dồ nh- sù li^an kốt @-êng bé trong vũng.
2. Sù khã khⁱⁿ trong viỐc trao quyỐn @çụ t- tở hỏ thềng kinh tở khu vùc ¶nh h-êng tở sù ch^anh lốch cĩa hỏ thặng ng@n hụng vụ tiỒn tở ề tống quèc gia.
3. Sù ph@n khóc thê tr-êng, @¶nh vê, x@y dừng th--ng hiỒu cĩa c,c quèc gia tiỐu vũng s«ng M^a K«ng ch-a @-íc @¶nh ra mét c,ch rậ rụng. Kh¶ n^{ing} tiỐp thê cĩa hçu hốt c,c tặ chọc trong c,c n-íc tiỐu vũng s«ng M^a K«ng cởn yỒu vồ mỀt qu¶n lý tiỐp thê @iỐm @Ồn, sọc chỏa cĩa @iỐm @Ồn vụ thiỒu nguản tụi chỷnh thỷch híp.
4. Sù c@n b»ng gi÷a viỐc ph,t triỐn kinh tở vụ sù suy tho,i vồ m«i tr-êng @ang nguy cụng mang tỷnh cết yỒu. ViỐc kh«ng cũ kh¶ n^{ing} bæ sung c,c nguy^an t¼c vụ thùc hụng ph,t triỐn bỒn v+ng @ềi với mọc @é qu¶n lý nguản tụi nguy^an tũ nhi^an, vⁱⁿ ho, vụ céng @àng @êa ph--ng cũ thố g@y n^an nh+ng bỀt lĩi tiỐm Ền cho m«i tr-êng.
5. Sù xung @ét vồ lĩi ých chung trong viỐc chia sĩ nguản tụi nguy^an du lậch gi÷a c,c quèc gia trong vũng cũ thố lụ kốt qu¶ cĩa gi¶ @¶nh sai r»ng kh,ch

du lịch ở những quốc gia khác, cụ thể những khách du lịch trên thực tế sẽ ở những nhà nghỉ.

6. Các nguyên lý và thực tiễn phát triển du lịch xã hội, công nghệ và môi trường cho các nhà ở trong hệ thống du lịch khu vực để tham gia vào quá trình thực hiện tài sản và những cam kết của nhà nghỉ xã hội, cộng đồng.
7. Những ảnh hưởng của nền kinh tế nhà nghỉ du lịch trong việc làm giảm sự nghèo đói, cũng như việc giải quyết phát triển bền vững. Sự hợp tác để phát triển các khu vực nông thôn và vùng biên giới. Sự hợp tác để phát triển các khu vực nông thôn và vùng biên giới. Sự hợp tác để phát triển các khu vực nông thôn và vùng biên giới.
8. Sự cạnh tranh của các nhà nghỉ trên toàn thế giới ngày càng tăng do các nhà nghỉ ở những nơi du lịch như là các công ty ở những nơi kinh tế và việc giải quyết các vấn đề truyền thống. Do đó, việc tìm kiếm khách hàng mới ngày càng trở nên khó khăn.
9. Sự thiếu hụt năng lực của thợ đến với chi phí cao trong các nhà ở và việc hình thành kinh doanh du lịch.
10. Sự khác biệt mang tính quyết định trong tiêu chuẩn chất lượng của sản phẩm, dịch vụ, giá, và công nghệ hiện đại là những yếu tố của khách du lịch.

Lời kết.....

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Phần 2: Những quan điểm về việc phát triển du lịch và tiếp thị ở Việt Nam.

1. Sự khác biệt và những ảnh hưởng của du lịch Việt Nam như thế nào?

() Khác so với các quốc gia láng giềng ASEAN (xin vui lòng chỉ ra hai điểm)

() Giềng víi c,c quèc gia l,ng giông ASEAN

2. Xin h·y ®,nh gi, 1, 2, 3, 4 hoÆc 5 cho mçi khÿa c¹nh sau. (5: Houn toùn ®ång ý, 4: sảng ý, 3: Trung lÛp, 2: Kh«ng ®ång ý, 1: Houn toùn kh«ng ®ång ý)

C,c khÿa c¹nh ®,nh gi,	Møc ®,nh gi,				
	5	4	3	2	1
<p>2.1 Nh÷ng yõu tè cũ thố sỗ ðông nh-nh÷ng biõu t-ìng ®Ồ qu¶ng b, ðu lÞch ViÕt Nam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VÎ ®Ñp thi¹n nhi¹n - HỒ sinh th,i phong phó - Lài sềng - Di s¶n v"n ho, phong phó - LÞch sỗ - Nghõ thuËt - C,c ®iõm kh¶o cæ hăc 					
<p>2.2 Nh÷ng chñ ®Ồ qu¶ng b, phi híp nhËt cũa s¶n phÈm ðu lÞch ViÕt Nam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Du lÞch V"n ho, - Du lÞch Di S¶n V"n Ho, - Du lÞch V"n Ho, & Thi¹n Nhi¹n - Du lÞch V"n Ho, - LÞch Sỗ - Du lÞch LÞch Sỗ - Du lÞch Dòn tét - Du lÞch Thi¹n Nhi¹n - Du lÞch Nghø biõn. - Du lÞch Sinh th,i - Du lÞch M'õ hiõm (møc ®é nhÑ) - Du lÞch Sọc khoÎ - Du lÞch Mua s¶m - Du lÞch Thố thao & Gi¶i trÝ. 					

3. Li¹n quan ®Õn nh÷ng chñ ®Ồ qu¶ng b, ®-íc ®-a ra trong c©u hái 2.2, nh÷ng ®iõm hÈp ðến nưc ®. cũ ã ã ðìng tiõm n"ng, cũ thố ®-íc ph,t triõn cho ðu lÞch ®Ồ phõc vù ®-íc nh÷ng chñ ®Ồ ®ã?

4.1Nh÷ng ®iÓm hÊp dÉn ®· cũ

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5.1Nh÷ng ®iÓm hÊp dÉn míi

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PhÇn 3: Quan ®iÓm vÒ m¹ng l-íi híp t,c gi÷a nh÷ng nhụ nghiªn cøu Th,i Lan vù bé phËn kinh doanh du lÞch ẽ ViÖt Nam.

1. Nh÷ng vÊn ®Ò khã kh"n cũa m¹ng l-íi híp t,c gi÷a nh÷ng nhụ nghiªn cøu Th,i Lan vù bé phËn kinh doanh du lÞch ẽ ViÖt Nam?

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APPENDIX G
STRUCTURE INTERVIEW FOR ACADEMIC FOCUS-GROUP MEETING
(PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TOURISM RELATED INSTITUTION IN CAMBODIA)



Focus Group Meeting
For
Academic Research sponsored by Thailand Research Fund

ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia

Clarification: After the formalization of ASEAN cooperation in tourism in 1976, tourism in this region has developed rapidly since 1980. The member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) have well recognized the importance of tourism as an activity for the movement of goods and people, trade and business investment, human resource development and the raising of living standards.

Since the tourism management, planning and development strategies in Vietnam, Cambodia and other member countries of ASEAN are focused primarily towards marketing and guest emphasized tactics (Choibamroong, 2005), the ASEAN tourism is critical in terms of tourism authenticity and loss of destination identity. It is worthy to note that Vietnam and Cambodia offer similar tourism resources and comparable stereotype of tourism products. As a consequence, this results a similar tourism image positioning in marketing scheme in the tourists' perceptions for these two countries.

This focus group meeting is designed for academic research. The aim is to study and investigate the current situation of tourism development of Vietnam and Cambodia towards the SWOT analysis. The information from the meeting will be used as primary data in proposing the image position for Vietnam and Cambodia. The results of study from this research will be used to create the data bank in tourism among the ASEAN countries.

The contributions provided by respondents in this meeting will have absolutely no negative impact on these individuals. Your assistance is critical to the advancement of the study and the researcher is extremely grateful for your assistance.

Definitions of terms:

Destination image is a distinctive message of mental impression or perceptions of a place, a product and experience with the destination. This is often a mixture of formation elements including attractions, scenery, hosts, cuisine, culture, peace, security and access.

Image positioning is what people think about or a perceptual position of any destination in people's minds. Image positioning depends on an understanding and attitude towards the destination. It can describe the market situation and set a destination differently apart from its competitors.

(Dr. Aree TIRASATAYAPITAK)

Researcher

Part 1: Opinions of SWOT analysis of the tourism development in Cambodia

1. Do you agree with the following proposed SWOT analysis of the tourism development in Cambodia? (Please mark (/) one box only).

() No

() Yes

Potential internal strengths

1. There are a bundle of pristine attractions that have yet to be developed and promoted. These places possess high potential of unique natural attractions, biodiversity and well associated with culture for the development as tourist attractions in the future, for instance, extensive mostly undeveloped white sandy beaches on the mainland and offshore islands in the southern coastal areas of Cambodia. Cambodia holds a specific characteristic based on its resources and market image. Though people well recognize this country from the glorious world heritage site of Angkor Wat, the country alternatively offers attractions to visit ranging from 29 historical attractions, 6 archeological sites, 6 natural attractions and specific topography of Great Lake and the Mekong River. All these 41 tourists attractions are mainly located in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Kampong Thom. In addition, Cambodia also has festivals and cultural events that appeal tourists to experience.

2. The major tourist destinations in Cambodia have been developed and promoted as “**The Jewel of Mekong**” in various characteristics to serve the needs and interests of the target markets. These attractions hold high potential to be promoted as multi-tourism circuits linking with destinations in other member countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region such as Thailand, Laos and Vietnam:

- Siem Reap	highlight characteristic: main city
- Angkor Wat	highlight characteristic: history
- Great Lake of Tonle Sap	highlight characteristic: nature/ culture
- Phnom Penh	highlight characteristic: history/ culture
- Ratanakiri	highlight characteristic: nature/ culture
- Sihanouk Ville	highlight characteristic: main city/ nature

Cambodia furthermore offers the important cluster of attractions that are significant to complementarily promote the tourism network of attractions in the group of the Jewel of Mekong:

- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Thom
- Koh Kong

3. Cambodia is rich in assortment of the cultural and historical heritages and natural coastal features. These features are suitable to diversify the development of tourism products and activities away from Siem Reap to other areas of country.

4. The southern coast of Cambodia is connecting with the coastal areas of its neighbors as Thailand and Vietnam. Cambodia would gain the benefits from the tourists' visit in the area and the integration of tourism development.

5. The main attraction in the southern coast as Sihanouk Ville has a relative proximity and good road access to Phnom Penh. This area provides the scenic beauty of the city environment setting and scenic offshore islands, which is a good marine area for diving and fishing as well as for developing cruise ship tourism.

6. Cambodia has a progressive policy to promote tourism as the foremost instrument to enhance economic development, alleviate poverty and provide better income opportunities to the residents. This greatly helps encourage the development and investment in tourism.

7. The government has positioned tourism as a high priority in the national development plan. In supporting tourism development, tourism officials and aircrews are sent for undertaking the training courses in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

8. The more liberated open sky policy can facilitate the opening of airway routes, the tourist flows to the country and help promote international tourism and provide more access to country.

8. The transparent tourism development policy from the government significantly stimulates the expansion of tourism development and investment in all dimensions.

9. According to the investment reforms, a new and relaxed foreign investment law allows a 70-year land lease to attract more joint-venture hotel projects. The new law also offers eight-year tax incentives, which allows the foreign companies to freely repatriate profits and import overseas staff for joint ventures.

10. Cambodia is now open for business and investment which offers overseas and local companies attractive and competitive incentives in terms of relaxation of investment application form, investment laws, and taxation barriers in line with establishment of political stability, infrastructure and human resources.

11. The government takes initiatives and concentrates in the development and construction of tourism infrastructure, roads, access to tourist sites, airports, harbors,

recreation centers, eco-tourism sites and other major related tourism development.

Several road projects are in progress of construction under the assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB) such as road no. 2 from the Vietnam border via Takeo Province to Phnom Penh, road no. 5, 6 from Skun to Siem Reap and from Thai border to Siem Reap, road no.7 in Eastern Cambodia and road from Thnal Totoeung via Snoul to Kratie. Some projects will commence soon such as road to Laos border via Stung Treng and road no. 78 from the Vietnam border to Ratanakiri.

12. Cambodia is working closely with neighboring countries, namely Thailand, Vietnam and Laos to open up more international borders and to facilitate border-crossing procedures between these countries and Cambodia.

13. There is a strong and stable government commitment to create a business-friendly environment that greatly helps enhance the tourism development in the country.

14. Cambodia decisively surpassed in human development index improvement since Cambodia followed the establishment of peace (www.un.org.kh).

15. Cambodia is situated in the good geographic location. Cambodia sits on major trade lanes and has access to major gateways of Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City (www.un.org.kh).

Potential internal weaknesses

1. The infrastructural accessibility including the frequency and quality of transportation linkages between destinations of origin with Cambodia is very limited. The transportation networks in Cambodia do not provide many options. The poor accessibility affects the promotion and development of tourist attractions.

2. Lack of basic infrastructure and facilities for tourism, for example; water supply, electric power, waste management, telecommunications, poor existing airport facilities and very limited air access crucially affect the promotion and the operation of tourism in other areas of country besides Angkor Wat, Phnom Penh and Sihanouk Ville. Some tourism activities such as adventure tourism cannot be promoted for the reasons of safety and security.

3. There are no clear policies that encourage the use of domestic products and services for the tourism industry. Cambodia is facing the barriers in management, the tourism economic leakages occurring from the use of an imported skilled workforce and luxury products and money spent on marketing.

4. The most supplies and equipments have been imported from Thailand. Then, the operating costs are passed on to the guests. This makes Cambodia a more expensive and less competitive destination than its neighbors.

5. The energy is expensive and widely unavailable in rural areas (www.un.org.kh).

6. The ownership of land is becoming dangerously and rapidly concentrated (www.un.org.kh).

7. Cambodia is one nation where poverty appears to be falling rather slowly though economic growth is reasonably rapid. Measured poverty has been reduced but poverty levels in Cambodia remain high and many areas are in danger of falling back into poverty (www.un.org.kh). Socio-economic development levels and residents' living standard are still low which affect the supply and demand relationship for tourism development. The market size of domestic tourism in Cambodia is small because the Cambodians have low purchasing power and the popularity in traveling is in the low level.

8. Corruption and poor governance in certain segments of public and private sectors remains uncontrolled.

9. An expensive and overstaffed state apparatus that contributes to high costs and is poorly well matched to manage global economic integration (www.un.org.kh).

10. Cambodia does not have a tourism development plan implemented for all areas of the country. The significant growth of tourism development is largely centered on Angkor Wat. This would be an obstacle to development of basic infrastructure and allocation of funds.

11. There is a lack of collection of reliable information on present and potential tourist attractions, a comprehensive marketing research and development strategy in order to better plan and develop tourism activities. The tourism attractions has not been competently presented and integrated into the tourism markets.

12. The systematic planning for long-term scale is poor. The current development is mainly based on the top-down policy. The appropriate vision, planning and management for the whole tourism system are critical. There is a lack of appropriate

coordination in management between the central government agencies and local administrative firms.

13. The promotion and marketing have encountered the current huge differences in the available accommodation capacity and standard of services and quality comparing to other more developed countries in the region such as Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia.

14. Cambodia is facing the shortage of highly trained and qualified persons who can carry out well the cooperative marketing. The design of value-added to tourism products is poor. The number of competitive tourism products is still limited. Marketing and promotion and branding have yet to meet the demand of the present prospective markets.

15. Lack of funds is a crucial issue for Cambodia. The country does not have adequate financial resources to develop basic infrastructure, which can meet the requirement of economic development and tourism development such as the accessibility, communication system and development of tourism circuits and attractions.

16. Natural resources are carelessly and extensively consumed. The problems of deforestation, illegal logging, poaching the rare species of animals, pollution and unsustainable resource utilization may be allowed to continue and take place due to the problems of corruption and lack of awareness in preserving the resource. There is a lack of simultaneous planning and strict control for exploiting natural resources. This causes many damages to the environment of many protected areas. Cambodia is facing the barrier of limited effectiveness of management in terms of the use of tourism resources and cooperation in developing tourism products.

17. The confidence of internal politics in Cambodia is not well accepted. Cambodia has been perceived as area with poor atmosphere and lack of security for tourism activities due to the political instability in the country. The problem of safety and security is still a serious impediment for tourism development.

18. Laws and regulations in Cambodia in regard tourism business operation are unclear and complicated and still have weak points in implementation, handling and control of tourism related issues. In relation to the sensitive issue of the immigration policies and entry formality, Cambodia often changes rules and regulations without a notification.

19. There are not sufficient good quality tourist sites to visit. Cambodia introduces principally the key attraction of Angkor Wat to the markets. Other tourist places are scattering around the country far from each other site and in small size and non-attractive.

20. Sihanouk Ville holds a weak image as a beach and marine resort destination. There is very limited beach resort development. Existing facilities and services are not of international standard and generally poor quality of tourist facilities could be found elsewhere in the area.

21. Seasonality is a major influence on tourism industry. Monsoon rains detract from year-round tourism.

22. Tourism competition in the country is high. The pricing system is still critical and lacks of standards. Cutting down prices is often used as the major marketing strategy to attract more businesses. Product prices are high and variable. There is a lack of tourism product diversities, quality and alternatives. It will degrade the overall quality of service

standards and competencies to carry on Cambodia's competitiveness among destinations in the region.

23. An unskilled and uneducated labor force is one of the major deficiencies. The level of illiteracy in Cambodia is still high. Cambodia found short of experienced human resources working in tourism or alternatively the funds to train the new employees. The human resource base for tourism will not be improved within the short period of time.

24. Promoting readiness of local administrations in order to transfer the responsibility of management from the central government to their hands is lacking. People do not have good knowledge and understanding of tourism. The involvement from local communities and local officials in the process of tourism development and management is low, especially in the decision-making process and controlling the areas.

25. The commercial sex tourism and spread of HIV/AIDS will not be controlled that would be an obstacle of market image.

Potential external opportunities

1. Regional political stability helps stimulate the growth of tourism development. The countries in the region are seeking for the collaboration in order to enhance the tourism in the region. When they have exploited the connecting tourism resources to create the multi-tourism circuits as a single tourist destination, this will be the significant opportunity for the global tourism development.

2. The volume of visitor arrivals and growth rate of tourism development in the neighboring countries is high. Therefore, there is a high possibility to exchange tourist

with other member countries and integrate in the regional development policy as a partner of single tourist destination.

3. The effective collaboration on tourism development among countries in the region will be the significant opportunity for mutual tourism development to create the multi-tourism circuits and expand the product lines.

4. The collaboration in the East-West Economic Corridor provides the possibility for the development of the overland route transportation, rapid infrastructure development such as accommodations and transportation networks.

5. The peaceful atmosphere in the region enhances the potential opportunity for investment in tourism.

6. The development of basic infrastructure and facilities throughout the ASEAN region contributes the dispersion of tourism growth.

7. Globalization, peace, cooperation and development in technology rapidly develop the world tourism, which illustrate the tourist demand toward South East Asia and Pacific. This is the good opportunity for Cambodia tourism to be developed.

9. The international acceptance from ASEAN, GMS, WTO, PATA, CLMT and CLMTV significantly enhances the positive image of Cambodia and provides more opportunities and the assistance in cooperative development in tourism.

10. The overall commitment to a sub-regional tourism development agenda among six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region remains strong.

11. The strategy to develop and promote the priority tourism zones and touring circuits along the Mekong River that contains most of the sub-region's major tourism resources has the potential to make a substantial contribution to mutual sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

12. Promoting the Greater Mekong Sub-region as single destination based on a bundle of cultural and natural products will hearten a sense of mission among stakeholders in all countries concerned to partake in sub-regional tourism promotion and development activities.

Potential external threats

1. The development of basic infrastructure such as road connections in the region takes too long time.

2. The difficulty in empowering the investment from the regional economic system in the development affects from the disparity of development of monetary and banking system in each country.

3. The market segmentation, positioning and branding practices of the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region are not clearly defined. The marketing capabilities of most GMS national tourism organizations are limited in terms of the weak destination marketing management, capacities and lack of adequate funding.

4. The balance between economic development and environmental degradation is going to be crucial. The inability to implement sustainable development principles and practices at the natural and cultural resource management level and at the community level may cause the potentially adverse environmental impacts.

5. The conflict of interests in sharing tourism resources pool among member countries in the region may be a result of incorrect assumption that the tourists going to another country are actually tourists who would come to their own country.
6. The effective pro-poor tourism development principles and practices as well as the assurance that all stakeholders in the regional tourism system are engaged in the process to maximize the commitment are still not applied.
7. The tourism industry's contribution to poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development is restricted and the reimbursement is disproportionately distributed all through the Greater Mekong Sub-region.
8. The competition between the destinations all over the world is increasingly serious since these countries aim at tourism as a means to boost the economic mechanism and retain the existing shares in the markets. Then, the search for new potential buyers is becoming powerful.
9. The energy shortage may cause the high cost in investment and tourism business operation.
10. The crucial difference in standard quality of products, services and prices greatly affects the tourists' satisfaction.
11. Cambodia is encountering high competition from other well-developed beach resort areas and newborn destinations in Southeast Asia.
12. Higher petroleum prices have a difficult impact on the Cambodian economy.

Recommendations:.....
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Part 2: Opinions of tourism development and destination marketing

- 1. How is the existing image position of tourism in Cambodia?
() Different from the ASEAN neighboring countries (Please go to Question 2)
() Similar to the ASEAN neighboring countries

- 2 Please rate 1,2,3,4 or 5 for each following aspect. (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = a neutral midpoint, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree).

Aspects	Assessed Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
<p>2.1. Elements could be used as a symbol for promoting tourism in Cambodia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beauty of nature - Fertileness of ecological system - Ways of life - Cultural and heritage prosperity - Long trace of history - Works of art 					
<p>2.2. The most appropriate promotional theme of tourism products in Cambodia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cultural tourism -Cultural and heritage tourism - Natural and cultural tourism -Historic-cultural tourism -Historical tourism -Ethno-tourism -Nature-based tourism -Beach resort tourism -Eco-tourism -Soft adventure tourism -Health tourism -Shopping tourism -Sport and recreational tourism - Shopping centers and souvenir shops 					

3. In regard with the recommended promotional theme in Question 2.2, what attractions do they have potential in being developed for tourism to serve up such theme?

3.1: The presented attractions

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3.2: The new attractions

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Part 3: Opinions of the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Cambodia

1. What are threats and problems of the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Cambodia?

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2. What measures could be undertaken to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Cambodia?

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THANK YOU

APPENDIX H
MINUTE OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING IN HANOI, VIETNAM



MINUTE OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING ON

The ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia 17 October 2006 Hanoi, Vietnam

1. The Focus Group Meeting on the research project “The ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia” was held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 17 October 2006.

2. The participants who attended the Focus Group Meeting comprised of the representatives from National Tourism Organization, Institute for Tourism Development Research, Hanoi Administration of Tourism, Business Sector Organization in Hanoi, Vietnam, the researcher, Faculty of Service Industries, Prince of Songkla University and the Research Manager of Area-Based Tourism Research Center for Sustainable Tourism Development, the Thailand Research Fund as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| - Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Huong | Deputy Director of Tourism Promotion Board
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism |
| - Mr. Nguyen Van Binh | Head of General Division
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism |
| - Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Binh | Head of Travel Business Management Department
Hanoi Administration of Tourism |
| - Mrs. Do Thi Thanh Hoa | Deputy Head of International Cooperation Department
Institute for Tourism Development Research |
| - Mr. La Xuan Hien | Director Hanoi Office
Vietnamtourism in Ho Chi Minh City |
| - Mr. Troung Nam Thang | General Manager Hanoi
OSC Travel (S.M.I. Group) Co.,Ltd |
| - Dr. Therdchai Choibamroong | Researcher Manager
Area-Based Tourism Research Center for Sustainable
Tourism Development, The Thailand Research Fund |
| -Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak | Researcher
Faculty Of Service Industries, Prince of Songkla
University |

3. The researcher, Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak informed the participants the background of the Project, the objectives and scope of discussion.

4. The participants discussed the following issues:

- The SWOT analysis of tourism development in Vietnam
- The Image Positioning of Vietnam including the promotional themes of tourism products as well as the recommended attractions and destinations
- The collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam
- The measures to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam

5. The participants agreed upon the SWOT analysis of the current operations of tourism development in Vietnam and the Image Positioning of Vietnam including the following promotional themes of tourism products as well as the recommended attractions and destinations.

5.1. Primary promotional theme: Natural and cultural tourism

5.2. Recommended attractions:

Halong Bay, Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An, My son, Sapa,
Ho Chi Minh City, Mekong Delta, Phan Thiet and
Nha Trang

In the future, Phu Quoc Island

5.3. Secondary promotional theme: Historical - cultural tourism

5.4. Recommended attractions:

The central Highland of Vietnam
Dien Bien Phu, Quang Tri

Name Urong
(Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Huong)

Name Urong
(Mr. Nguyen Van Binh)

Name -
(Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Binh)

Name Am
(Mrs. Do Thi Thanh Hoa)

Name La Xuan Hien
(Mr. La Xuan Hien)

Name Truong Nam Thang
(Mr. Truong Nam Thang)

Name.....
(Dr. Therdchai Choibamroong)

Name A. Tirasa tanyapitale.
(Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak)



MINUTE OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING ON

The ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia 17 October 2006 Hanoi, Vietnam

1. The Focus Group Meeting on the research project “The ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia” was held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 17 October 2006.
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 - Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Huong Deputy Director of Tourism Promotion Board
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
 - Mr. Nguyen Van Binh Head of General Division
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
 - Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Binh Head of Travel Business Management Department
Hanoi Administration of Tourism
 - Mrs. Do Thi Thanh Hoa Deputy Head of International Cooperation Department
Institute for Tourism Development Research
 - Mr. La Xuan Hien Director Hanoi Office
Vietnamtourism in Ho Chi Minh City
 - Mr. Troung Nam Thang General Manager Hanoi
OSC Travel (S.M.I. Group) Co.,Ltd
 - Dr. Therdchai Choibamroong Researcher Manager
Area-Based Tourism Research Center for Sustainable
Tourism Development, The Thailand Research Fund
 - Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak Researcher
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 - The measures to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Vietnam

5. The participants agreed upon the SWOT analysis of the current operations of tourism development in Vietnam and the Image Positioning of Vietnam including the following promotional themes of tourism products as well as the recommended attractions and destinations.

5.1. Primary promotional theme:

5.2. Recommended attractions:

..... Natural, Cultural World Heritages

..... Culinary Art - amazing, healthy & tasty

..... Long coast - best beaches - bay - islands with luxury resorts along coastal area.

..... Diversity & habitats of 54 ethnics

..... Eco tourism, adventure tourism

5.3. Secondary promotional theme:

5.4. Recommended attractions:

..... - Ideal destination for MICE tourism

..... - Cacaoan

..... - Combination of training & ~~the~~ discovering

..... - Mineral streams

..... - Golf courses & other sports games

..... - Sea port shopping

Name..... Thi Binh
(Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Binh)

Name..... Nam Thang
(Mr. Truong Nam Thang)

Name.....
(Dr. Therdchai Choibamroong)

Name..... A. Tirasatayapitale
(Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak)

APPENDIX I

MINUTE OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING IN PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA



MINUTE OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING ON

The ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia 24 October 2006 Phnom Penh, Cambodia

1. The Focus Group Meeting on the research project “The ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia” was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 24 October 2006.

2. The participants who attended the Focus Group Meeting comprised of the representatives from Ministry of Tourism, Business Sector Organization in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the Searcher, Faculty of Service Industries and the Research Manager of Area-Based Tourism Research Center for Sustainable Tourism Development, The Thailand Research Fund as follows:

- Mr. Tith Chantha Deputy Director General of Tourism
Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. Pak Sokhom Director of Marketing and Promotion Department
Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. Chuun Nak Deputy Director of International Cooperation and
ASEAN Department
Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. Chraloeng Somethea Deputy Director
Ministry of Tourism
- President of Cambodia Association of Travel Agents
- Co-Chairman of Tourism Working Group
- Advisor to Cambodia Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Therdchai Choibamroong Researcher Manager
Area-Based Tourism Research Center for Sustainable
Tourism Development, The Thailand Research Fund
- Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak Researcher
Faculty Of Service Industries, Prince of Songkla
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- The collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Cambodia
- The measures to boost up the collaborative networks between the Thai researchers and the tourism business sectors in Cambodia

5. The participants approved the SWOT analysis of the current operations of tourism development in Cambodia and the Image Positioning of Vietnam including the following promotional themes of tourism products as well as the recommended attractions and destinations.

5.1. Primary promotional theme: Cultural and heritage tourism

5.2. Recommended attractions:

Siem Reap Angkor Wat, Preah Vihear, Sombor Preay Kuk
Phnom Penh and surroundings

New attractions: Koh Ker, Phnom Da, Boeng Melea, Banteay Chhama

5.3. Secondary promotional theme: Natural and cultural tourism

5.4. Recommended attractions:

northern eastern of Cambodia
Sihanoukville
Kampot
Kep
Koh Kong

New attractions: Tonle Sap Lake and surrounding provinces: Siem Reap, Kampong Thum, Kampong Chhnang, Popsat, Battambang

Name.....
(Mr. Tith Chantha)

Name.....
for (Mr. Pak Sokhom) pea pheap

Name.....
~~(Mr. Chuan Nak)~~
HOY PHIRZAK

Name.....
(Mr. Chraloeng Somethea)

Name.....
(Mr. Ho Vandy)

Name.....
(In Thoeun)

Name.....
()

Name.....
(Dr. Therdechai Choibamroong)

Name.....
A. Tirasatayapitak
(Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak)

AUTHOR'S CURRICULUM VITAE

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Aree TIRASATAYAPITAK **Sex:** Female

Date of Birth: 24 December 1964

Home Address: 10/50 Maeluan Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000, Thailand

Language: Thai, English and French

E-mail address: atirasatayapitak@yahoo.com

Education:

2002-2005 Ph.D. Degree (Discipline: Tourismologie)
Mention: Très honorable avec félicitations
Université de Perpignan Via Domitia, France

1999 - 2000 Master Degree (DESS Formation en Ingénierie
Touristique: Option Tourisme et Hôtellerie Internationale)
Université de Perpignan Via Domitia, France

1982 – 1986 Bachelor of Arts (French)
Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus

1978 - 1982 Satee Phuket Secondary School, Phuket, Thailand

Professional Experiences:

September 1996 to present University Professor in Tourism Business
Management
Faculty of Service Industries
Prince of Songkla University, Phuket
Campus

August 1993 – August 1996 Marketing Department
Union Bank of Bangkok, Phuket Branch

October 1991 – July 1993	Chief Operation, Group Reservation Turismo Thai Company, Phuket
October 1990 – September 1991	Chief Operation Yatch Charter Company, Phuket
August 1987 – September 1990	Chief Operation Turismo Thai Company, Phuket
September 1986 – July 1987	Counter Clerk Diethelm Travel Company, Phuket
March 1986 – August 1986	Tour Guide Bhuket Travel & Tours, Phuket

Additional Professional Activities (Training):

March 25 - April 5, 2002	Certificate awarded by Airline Training Centre For training program “Ticketing and Reservation”
November 5-7, 2001	Certificate awarded by ABACUS Distribution Systems (Thailand) LTD For training program “Fare and Ticketing Printing”
August 6-9, 2001	Certificate awarded by Thai - Amadeus Southeast Asia For training program “Basic reservation”
July 24- August 2, 2000	Certificate awarded with Distinction by International Air Transport Association For training program “Basic Fares & Ticketing”

June 15- 19, 1998	Certificate awarded by the World Tourism Organization For training program “Educating the Educators”
May 28- 30, 1997	Certificate awarded by the American Express For “Sawasdee Host” Leaders Training
Other Appointments:	
September 30 – November 12, 1998	Visiting Professor, Université de Perpignan Via Domitia, France
September 2001-August 2002	Secretary of the Committee to establishing the “Standard Curriculum in Tourism, Hotel and Hospitality”, sponsored by Commission on Higher Education, Ministry of Education
October 15- November 15, 2005	Course coordinator of the subject “Environmental and Cultural Management in Hospitality and Tourism” Master Degree Program, Faculty of Service Industries
August 2006 to present	Committee to restructuring the Curriculum for Master Degree Program in Hospitality and Tourism Management (International Program)

August 4, 2006	Manuscript reviewer for Publications in the fifth Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Student Research in Tourism 2006
August 15, 2006	Research advisor to research projects “ The Information Data Bank for Sustainable Area-based Development and Management, The Eastern Provinces (Koh Chang): 11 projects, sponsored by Thailand Research Funds
September 20-22, 2006	Session Chairman The Fifth Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Student Research in Tourism 2006 Siam City Hotel, Bangkok
October 14- November 4, 2006	Course coordinator of the subject “Environmental and Cultural Management in Hospitality and Tourism” Master Degree Program, Faculty of Service Industries
October 30, 2006	Research advisor to research projects “The Information Data Bank for Sustainable Area-based Development and Management, Andaman Cluster (Phuket, Phang Nga, Krabi), phase2: 9 projects, sponsored by Thailand Research Funds

November 21, 2006

Reader for Publication of Journal of Thai Hospitality & Tourism, sponsored by Tourism Academic Association Thailand on the article "Knowledge, Attitude and Eco-tourism Behaviour of Youths in Thailand"

November 30, 2006

Speaker at the Annual Tourism Conference 2006 on "Partnership in Vietnam's Tourism Human Resources Development, sponsored by Vietnam Administration of Tourism Association and the European Union, Danang, Vietnam

Additional Academic Activities (Advisor of Theses):

June 2006 to present

Advisor of Theses
Master Degree Program in Hospitality and Tourism Management (International Program)
Faculty of Service Industries

Theses Topics
1. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management: The Case of Virachey National park, Ratanakiri and Steung Treng Provinces, Cambodia
2. The Nature-based Tourism Development in Muang District, Suratthani Province and Khnom District, Nakhon Srithammarat Province
3. Sustainable Tourism satisfaction among Local Residents in Koh Panyi, Phang Nga Province

June 2006 to present

Co-advisor of Theses

Master Degree Program in Hospitality and
Tourism Management (International
Program)

Faculty of Service Industries

Theses Topics
1. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Sakhu, Amphur Muang, Changwat Phuket
2. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Maikhao, Amphur Thalang, Changwat Phuket
3. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Kamala, Amphur Thalang, Changwat Phuket
4. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Paklok, Amphur Thalang, Changwat Phuket
5. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Cherngtalay, Amphur Thalang, Changwat Phuket
6. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Chalong, Amphur Muang, Changwat Phuket
7. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Karon, Amphur Muang, Changwat Phuket
8. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Rawai, Amphur Muang, Changwat Phuket
9. Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management at Local Administration Organization: The Case of Tambon Vichit, Amphur Muang, Changwat Phuket
10. Environmental Impact of Adventure Tourism in Krabi, Thailand

October 2006 to present

Advisor of Theses

Master Degree Program in Hospitality and
Tourism Management (International
Program)

Faculty of Service Industries

Theses Topics
1. Tourism impact in rural communities: The case of four districts in Songkram River Basin, North-eastern Thailand
2. The sustainable tourism elimination poverty (ST-EP) in Ubon Ratchathani Province: The case study of Khong Jiam District
3. An assessment of skills requirement of the employees in inbound tour operators in Andaman Cluster, Thailand
4. The challenges and opportunities of the market for sustainable natural heritage tourism: The case of Sihanouk Ville, Kingdom of Cambodia
5. The potential to position Phuket, Thailand as a wedding destination
6. The potential of special interest tourism in Trang, Thailand
7. The socio-cultural impacts of tourism development on sea gypsy communities, Phuket

October 2006 to present

Committee of Theses

Master Degree Program in Hospitality and
Tourism Management (International
Program)

Faculty of Service Industries

Theses Topics
1. Sustainable tourism development in wetland area: A Case Study of Talay Noi Non-hunting Area, Phattalung
2. The Tourists' satisfaction with public transportation in Phuket
3. The performance gap of hospitality and tourism graduates from the perspective of recruiters and graduates
4. Quality of human resources development programs in Phuket upscale hotel
5. Repositioning marketing strategies for Phuket travel agents
6. The evaluation of hospitality and tourism internship program in Phuket
7. Information communication technology applications by small and medium-sized tourism enterprises in Thailand
8. Marketing strategies of Thai online travel agencies
9. Factors affecting hotel employee turnover in Phuket

Theses Topics
10. Travel motivation, decision making process and behaviour of Thai outbound tourists
11. Senior tourist market in Thailand
12. Marketing strategies to develop value-added products and services for hotels in Bhutan

October 14- November 4, 2006

Course coordinator of the subject
“Environmental and Cultural Management
in Hospitality and Tourism”
Master Degree Program, Faculty of
Service Industries

May 1-24, 2007

Trainer for International Training on
Tourism in Thailand: Development,
Management and Sustainability,
organized by Faculty of Service
Industries, Prince of Songkla University
and Thailand International Development
Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ministry of
Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand

Awards and Scholarships:

PSU Ph.D. Degree Scholarship, 2002 – 2005

PSU Master Degree Scholarship, 1999 – 2000

Thesis:

PhD Evaluation of an international collaborative tourism development in the Mekong Delta: Southeast Asia, Université de Perpignan Via Domitia, 2003

Researches:

ASEAN Image Positioning: The Case of Vietnam and Cambodia, supported by Thailand Research Funds, 2006.

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The Feasibility Study of Social Impact Assessment of Phuket City Bay Project, supported by Phuket Provincial Administration, 2006.

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Publications:**Papers in Refereed Journal**

With E. Laws, "Developing a new multi-nation tourism region, Thai perspectives on the *Mekong initiatives*", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 8,1, 2003.

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Other Publications

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"Evaluation of an international collaborative tourism development in the Mekong Delta: Southeast Asia", *Proceedings of the 2005 ASAIHL Seminar on Hospitality and Tourism Education*, Phuket, Thailand, 2005.

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With Chadaporn Sittha, "An Assessment of Skills Requirements of the Employees in Inbound Tour Operators in Andaman Cluster: Thailand", *Proceedings of the 6th Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism*, Xiamen, China, 2007

With Phatthamaka Inthisang, "Tourism Impact on Rural Community: the Case of Four Districts in Songkhram River Basin, Northeastern Thailand", *Proceedings of the 6th Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism*, Xiamen, China, 2007

With Kosita Boonyakiat, "Sustainable Tourism Satisfaction among Local Residents of Koh Pan Yi, Phang Nga Province", *Proceedings of the 8th National Grad Research Conference "Thai Graduate Studies under His Royal Beneficence"*, Bangkok, Thailand, 2007

With Tatchaya Kanchai, "Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism development on the Sea Gypsy Communities of Phuket", *Proceedings of the 9th National Grad Research Conference*, Bangkok, Thailand, 2008

With Sayapan Jaijong, "The Potential of Special Interest Tourism Market in Trang Province, Thailand", *Proceedings of the 9th National Grad Research Conference*, Bangkok, Thailand, 2008

With Orawan jangjul, "The potential to Position Phuket, Thailand as a Wedding Destination", *Proceedings of the 9th National Grad Research Conference*, Bangkok, Thailand, 2008

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ARTICLE 1

ASEAN IMAGE POSITIONING: VISIT VIETNAM

ASEAN IMAGE POSITIONING: VISIT VIETNAM

Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak

Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism

Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus

E-mail: sukwan@phuket.psu.ac.th

Tel: 089-645-3539

I am Aree, a lady tripper from Thailand. This is not my first visit to the impressive country of Vietnam. The alluring nature and culture I have experienced may come as a surprise to others. Following my first journey four years ago, the persistent use of the horn to warn other drivers along the roads in Hanoi, diligent people in the local markets, good taste of Pho and the fascinating spirit of historic Vietnam always caused me to dream about the next trip to explore more of this wonderful country. At last, I am here again to step on the land of Nguyen's dynasty. Inevitably, my current stay will combine both leisure and work together under the support from the Thailand Research Fund. I stay in the Galaxy Hotel located in the Hanoi old quarter near the wall of Nguyen's dynastic citadel. My friend, Mr. Troung Nam Thang who is the General Manager Hanoi from OSC Travel (S.M.I.Group), Co.,Ltd has worked with me on my project as a co-partner from Vietnam and as a narrator to help complete the pictures of Nguyen's dynastic boundary that I have in mind. We enjoyed discussing and sharing ideas on tourism development in Vietnam, especially the places to visit. What I learned from him and his friends about Vietnam tourism is that Vietnam is a country with the unique physical and social characteristics. The tourism potential of Vietnam is blessed with nature, culture and humanity. They suggested that if people want to discover Vietnam, they should commence their trip on the highlights of natural and cultural tourism to the following classic attractions.

My friend proposed the first day of an exciting trip starting from **Ho Chi Minh City**, the largest city in Vietnam and the business capital of the country. Better known by its former name of Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City is the old capital of South Vietnam which has influences from the United States during the Vietnamese War. Before the Americans played the important role over Saigon, this city was governed by the French. Therefore, the diversity of mixed culture between western and eastern style could be seen everywhere through restaurants, the way of living, dress as well as the way of thinking. The best way to see Hoi Chi Minh City is on foot. Ho Chi Minh City possesses many beautiful pagodas. One of the most interesting is the Nghia An Hoi Quan Pagoda on Nguyen Trai. Cho Lon or Ho Chi Minh City's Chinatown is another place to visit. Cho Lon is one of the oldest and most mysterious parts of Saigon with several temples of interest such as the colorful Emperor of Jade Temple, the Quan Am Pagoda, Phuoc An Hoi Quan Temple and the Thien Hau Pagoda. Far from the center of Ho Chi Minh City, the Cu Chi Tunnels, often combined in the tour package offered to tourists, are part of an extensive network of underground passages, which extend as far as Cambodia (www.vietnamonline.com).



Source: www.wordtravels.com, www.terragalleria.com

Phan Thiet is 200 km from Ho Chi Minh City and lies south of Cam Ranh Bay on the southernmost stretch of Central Vietnam. Phan Thiet is a small and sleepy seaside

town that has a certain old-fashioned and colorful fishing village charm. The attraction of Phan Thiet is the beaches. About 10 minutes from town is the longest and most popular Mui Ne beach. It can be considered the main tourist area as most of the resorts are located here. Mui Ne is a long, straight and narrow road with resorts by the beach and a handful of restaurants on the other side. The Red Sand Dunes in Mui Ne draw a steady stream of curious crowds. Recently a new Co Thach tourism village was constructed with many attractive stilt-houses available to both pilgrims and to those who come to enjoy the beautiful landscape (www.traveltovietnam.com).



Source: www.pbase.com, www.traveltovietnam.com

Upon leaving Ho Chi Minh City in the early morning, visitors could start to drive along the roads to Vinh Long to visit **the Mekong Delta**. The Mekong Delta (an ancient Khmer territory) is the southernmost region of Vietnam and the rice bowl of the country. The most popular destination for day-trippers to the delta looking for a taste of authentic delta life is My Tho. Visitors can take a sampan along the waterways, visit tropical fruit orchards and try the local delicacy, Elephant's Ear fish. Can Tho is one of the more attractive delta towns. The delta's market, Cai Rang Floating Market, is 6 km from Can Tho. Chau Doc is a busy little riverside town with distinctive architectures of Cham, Khmer and ethnic Chinese communities around the town. Off the eastern coast of the delta near Cambodia is the island of Phu Quoc. Phu Quoc is blessed with some beautiful white sandy beaches and clear blue seas (www.asiahighlightstravel.com).



Source: www.vietscape.com

Phu Quoc Island (the island of "99 mountains" or the Emerald Island) is part of an archipelago of 105 islands in the Gulf of Thailand with a land area of 1,320km and the best beaches in Vietnam, a large forest area, and coral around the small islands. About fifty percent of the islands are covered in forests and flanked by unspoiled sandy beaches. The islands and their surrounding marine areas are currently being considered for 'biosphere' listing by UNESCO (www.haivenu-vietnam.com). Kem Beach is the most beautiful beach in Phu Quoc. In addition to beaches, other interesting places in the island are the Temple and Tomb of national hero Nguyen Trung Truc in Rach Gia, Mac Cuu Tomb, the Bird Sanctuary, a mangrove forest, Tam Bao Pagoda and Tan Hoi Pagoda. Activities on and off the island include snorkeling, scuba diving, trekking and fishing (www.circleofasia.com).



Source: www.vietnamsunshinetravel.com, www.relaxindochina.com

The Tay Nguyen Central Highlands are the next destination. After breakfast in Ho Chi Minh City, visitors take a short flight to Pleiku and stay overnight in Pleiku. The

highlands cover five provinces including Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong and Lam Dong. Heading out off town, we travel by roads to Kon Tum. Kon Tum is the largest plateau on the central Highlands. The provincial capital of Kon Tum is the township of the same name located on the northern part of Central Highlands. Ethnic minorities make up 51% of the population of Kontum. Kontum has a colourful, diversified culture of ethnic groups. Their customs are unique with special traditional festivals like cong chieng (gongs), buffalo stabling, leaving- the- tomb and new rice festivals. Over the years, gongs have become a typical cultural characteristic, unique and attractive of the Central Highlands. The major attractions in Kon Tum comprise Ba Na Village, Tay Nguyen Grave Rituals and Communal house.



Source: www.perfectour.com.vn.

The next inspiring journey begins as visitors leave Pleiku and drive to Quy Nhon Town and stay overnight here. Today, we make our way down the central coast through Tuy Hoa rice bowls to **Nha Trang**. The city is mainly renowned for its non-Vietnamese past as it was an important town in the Kingdom of Champa (www.vietnamopentour.com) and has developed into Viet Nam's best seaside resort with the fabulous sunny weather, turquoise sea and white sandy beaches (www.pattayacity.com). Nha Trang has several famous islands such as Hon Tre, Hon Yen and Hon Rua (www.vietscape.com). Cam Ranh Bay is one of the largest natural harbours of the world. Highlights of Nha Trang include Nha Trang Beach, the Po Nagar Cham towers, Tam Island, Long Son Pagoda, Hon Chong, Cau Da, Hon Yen and the

Nha Trang Cathedral. In the early afternoon of the next day, we take a short flight back to Ho Chi Minh City.



Source: www.terrageria.com

The next destination of the trip is **Hue** via a short flight from Ho Chi Minh City. Hue was the ancient capital of Vietnam and is one of the most popular destinations for visitors to Vietnam offering the complex of monuments listed among the UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. This city looks more like a massive open-air museum with hundreds of temples, pagodas, palaces and tombs. The historical museum is one of the best in the country. Some must-see places in Hue are the old Imperial complex, the Citadel & Forbidden City, Khai Dinh Emperor's Tomb, Tu Duc Emperor's Tomb and Thien Mu Pagoda. Each tomb is a walled compound containing temples, palaces, and lakes (www.footprintsvietnam.com).



Source: www.footprintsvietnam.com, www.en.wikipedia.org

From Hue, visitors travel to **Danang** through the Hai Van Pass, crossing the Truong Son Mountain Range that offers a spectacular view. Danang, encircled with world cultural heritage sites in Hue and Hoi An (My Son), is often referred as ‘Saigon of the North’. Its town is situated on the west bank of the Han River. The tour of Danang includes the Cham Museum, China Beach, Danang Cathedral, Caodai Temple, Tam Bao Pagoda, Pho Da Pagoda, Cham Museum, Hai Van Pass and Marble Mountain (www.circleofasia.com).

An hour drive from Danang, visitors should not miss to visit **My Son**. My Son, one of the main attractions located in Quang Nam province was an imperial city during the Champa dynasty between the 4th and the 12th centuries. (www.traveltovietnam.com). The My Son Sanctuary includes temples and towers connected to one other through complicated red brick designs. The main component of the design is the tower, built to reflect the divinity of the king (www.traveltovietnam.com). The monuments bear a strong resemblance to Khmer structures found in present-day Cambodia and eastern Thailand (www.orientalarchitecture.com).



Source: www.whc.unesco.org, www.orientalarchitecture.com

Heading out of town 30 kilometres south of Danang, visitors make their way to **Hoi An** - a quiet riverside town dotted with temples, shrines, Chinese style tile-roofed wooden houses girding a long narrow road, traditional lifestyle and Chinese architecture (www.circleofasia.com) and one of Vietnam's four World Heritage sites. Today, there are more than 450 houses in the historic quarter of Hoi An. The city also boasts 87 pagodas and temples, 24 ancient wells, numerous assembly halls and merchants clubs, and an ancient bridge (*Lai Vien Kieu*) (www.globalheritagefund.org).



Source: www.footprintsvietnam.com

After scattering along the small streets with the town's multicultural past, visitors return to Danang for another flight to Hanoi. **Hanoi** is considered to be the cultural centre of Vietnam. When talking about Hanoi, the picture of Uncle Ho or Ho Chi Minh comes up in my mind. Uncle Ho is the hero of the Vietnamese who liberated Hanoi from the influence of France, Japan during the Second World War and the United States. The atmosphere of Hanoi is very lively with thousand of motorcycles on the street and loud noise of horn to caution each other when driving. Hanoi is located lower than the Red River about 3 meters. Visitors could take a full-day tour of Vietnam's capital including Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum and traditional stilt house, Hoan Kiem Lake, the Ho Chi Minh Museum, the One-Pillar Pagoda, Quan Thanh Temple and Tran Quoc pagoda along the shore of West Lake. The Temple of Literature or the Vietnam's first university is the place that should not miss because this place constitutes a fine example of well-preserved traditional Vietnamese architecture. To the north and west of the Ho Hoan Kiem Lake is Hanoi's old quarter with its narrow cobblestone streets. South and east of the lake, the

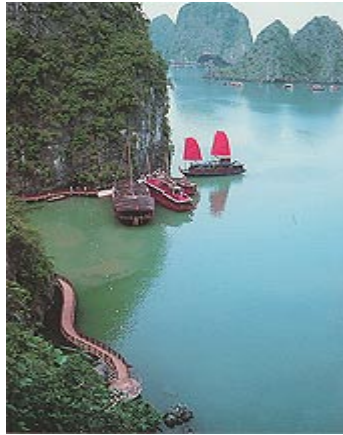
wide tree-lined boulevards of the old French quarter offer a contrast to the busy old quarter. Many colonial villas are now home to embassies, upscale hotels and restaurants ([www. en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)).



Source: www.footprintsvietnam.com

Along the way from Hanoi to Ha Long Bay through the scenic countryside, visitors stop at Dong Trieu pottery village and overnight in Ha Long. **Ha Long Bay** is recognized as the eighth wonder of the world and the 2nd of the four listed World Heritages of Vietnam (www.threeland.com). The exciting five hour cruise will provide a fantastic view of the scenery. Ha Long Bay's limestone islands are spotted with caves of all sizes and shapes. Most of these are accessible only by charter boat but some can easily be visited on tour such as Hang Dau Go (Wooden Stakes Cave), Hang Sung Sot (Surprising Cave) and Hang Trong (Drum Grotto). Some of the islands support floating villages of fishermen ([www. halongbay-vietnam.com](http://www.halongbay-vietnam.com)).

Cat Ba Island is situated in Ha Long Bay, 50 km to the east of Hai Phong City in northern Vietnam. It is the largest of 366 islands in the Cat Ba Archipelago. The Cat Ba was approved as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (www.Halongbay-Vietnam.com). A trip to Cat Ba Island can be separated or combined with a visit to Ha Long Bay. The island has a few fishing villages and a small town. On the east side of the island, Lan Ha Bay is the interesting attraction which has numerous beaches and excellent scenery (www.accessivevietnam.net). After a seafood lunch, we return to Hanoi to see an evening performance of Hanoi's famous water puppets and overnight in this charming city.



Source: www.traveljournals.net, www.vietscape.com

From Hanoi, visitors take the night train up to Lao Cai and then transfer to **Sapa**. Sapa has been rediscovered as a tourist attraction for visitors who come to trek into the green valley and experience the colourful traditional cultures of various ethnic minorities groups. The trekking begins from the Zay village – Ta Van in the morning. We will have a magnificent view of the minority villages and terraced rice fields beneath us. Destinations include remote villages, scenic vistas, and even the top of Southeast Asia's highest peak: Fansipan Mountain (www.easia-adventures.com). Sapa has many natural sites such as Ham Rong Mountain, Silver Waterfall, Rattan Bridge, Bamboo Forest and Ta Phin Cave. Sapa is most beautiful in spring. Apricot, plum and cherry flowers are splendidly beautiful. (www.relaxindochina.com). Visitors need to transfer to Lao Cai and board the night train back to Hanoi.



Source: www.terrageria.com

If visitors still have time, they can further our trip to **Den Hung or Kings Hung Temple**, one of the major attractions in Phu Tho. Phu Tho is located in the Plains and Midland in the North of Vietnam and shares a border with Tuyen Quang. Phu Tho is considered as ancestral land of Vietnam. Den Hung (Hung Temple) Remains is tied to the legend about 18 kings Hung who built Van Lang State, the first one of Vietnam, with Phong Chau as the capital. Phu Tho has bright culture. Archaeological sites like Son Vi, Dong Dau, Lang Ca and many pagodas, temples, tombs around Nghia Linh Mountain prove that Phong Chau used to be cultural centre of ancient Vietnamese. Phu Tho is home of many festivals including Bach Hac and Chu Hoa but the most honorable one is Den Hung Festival. (www.vietnamtourism.com).



Source: www.flickr.com, www.travel.webshots.com

My pleasant time in Vietnam is passing by so fast. I say Goodbye to Hanoi from a nice corner in the Roadside Café at Galaxy Hotel. I am never bored to memorize the fascination of Vietnamese ways of life and local charm of Hanoi. Country exploring has

only begun. The colorful lanterns lightening the old city of Hoi An on the full moon night always await me to see.....one day so soon.

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ARTICLE 2

SOHM SWAAKOKM: KHMER EMPIRE AS A MUST OF CAMBODIA

SOHM SWAAKOKM: KHMER EMPIRE AS A MUST OF CAMBODIA

Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak

Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism

Prince of Songkla Univeristy, Phuket Campus

E-mail:sukwan@phuket.psu.ac.th

Tel: 089-645-3539

Tour operators expand the alternative tourism activities to serve more independent-minded tourists who have a desire for self-fulfillment and learning and search for physically and mentally challenging experiences. Special interest tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, adventure travel or if you wish, ecotourism represent the new trend to serve this niche market. Tracing back to learn about the Khmer Empire and the human past makes a remarkable discovery of Cambodia for me. "Have you been to Angkor Wat?" is always the key question that I have been asked at some point in the talk about Cambodia with friends and students. My name is Aree. I am a lecturer at the Faculty of Service Industries. My dream is clued to the historical horizons of the past Khmer Empire rather than going shopping in the crowded cities. It is noteworthy that much of the Khmer remains are cloaked in mystery and untapped by mass tourism. Hence, these precious gems allure and offer visitors an opportunity to explore the glories of the great Khmer past. My voyage to Cambodia will not have been successfully achieved without the opportunity and support from the Thailand Research Fund. I anchored my stay at Sunway Hotel, the four star hotel located nearby Wat Phnom. Mr. Ho Vandy who is the President of Cambodia Association of Travel Agents in Phnom Penh has cooperated with my project in Phnom Penh and provided me the overview information of guided cultural and heritage tour of Cambodia discovery. During this trip, I had chance to explore only Phnom Penh and surroundings and Siem Reap Angkor Wat. Though I had no opportunity to visit all destinations recommended during this time

of my visit, I still dream of trip to “Sohm swaakokm” the land of rich civilization that people always think of as a MUST once in lifetime.

The trip started at Sunway Hotel in **Phnom Penh**. The environment in the hotel is not much different from hotels in other destinations that replace international atmosphere to serve tourists from worldwide markets. The hotel staff wear the uniforms dissimilarly from my expectation that hope to see the staff wearing the traditional costume. I took taxi from the hotel to visit Phnom Penh. I arrived at the center of this capital with the acknowledgement that Phnom Penh is the important civilization source of the Greater Mekong Sub-region for it is the center of communication between human and god. Pictures published in guide books of Phnom Penh greatly inspire my imagination. Image of Phnom Penh from variable sources of media and movies significantly support this city to be a place to discover. Along the street, people walk or use bicycles, motorcycle, cars and local buses. Interestingly, the way of life of local people here is comparable to those of people in other capitals in the East. At the center of Phnom Penh, visitors would feel that tourist attractions are scattered around such as Wat Phnom temple, the national museum, the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and National Museum. The first place to visit should be the national museum. This is the fascinating place to learn about the history, religion and beliefs of the Cambodians. Not far from the national museum, the Royal Palace significantly attires the visitors to appreciate its grandeur and glory with the architectural decoration alike the Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand. Located peacefully in the center of city, Wat Phnom temple is designated as the symbol of Phnom Penh for the name of capital, Phnom Penh derived from the name of this temple. On the whole, the Capital of Cambodia located at the confluence of the Mekong, Bassac and Tonle Sap rivers. This greatly provides the opportunity to discover the assortment of way of life of people along the river bank. We end the first day with sunset cruise in the confluence of Tonle Sap and the Mekong.



Source: www.en.wikipedia.org

The next morning we visit other historical sites such as the old capital of Oudong and the Angkorian ruins of Phnom Chisor and Phnom Da which lie within an easy day-trip of Phnom Penh. **Phnom Chisor**, the ancient Khmer temple constructed in the 11th century of laterite and brick with carved sandstone lintels, is surrounded by the partially ruined walls of a two and a half metre wide gallery with inward facing windows. As with the other hilltop temples, there are spectacular views of the surrounding countryside and Phnom Chisor makes an ideal excursion combined with Tonle Bati and Ta Prohm Temple. **Angkor Borei** is a town in the area of several ruins and archaeological digs. The area has been continuously inhabited for at least 2500 years and has yielded artefacts dating from the Funan period (4th/5th century) and Chenla (8th century) as well as the later Angkorian period. The small temple of Phnom Da was constructed in the late 7th-early 8th century, during the Chenla period, under Bahavarman. The prasat ruins of Phnom Da on top of the hill are 11th century C.E. Angkorian era constructed under King Rudravarman. Note the carvings on the lintels and the unusual north-facing entrance. There is a small museum in Angkor Borei displaying some of the artefacts from the area (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).



Source: www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org

Sambor Prei Kuk is located in Kampong Thom Province. The ancient city where monuments of Sambo Prei Kuk are found today was identified as ISANAPURA, the capital of Chenla in 7th century. Many decorative details in Khmer architecture and sculpture are classified as Sambor style. Sambor Prei Kuk cluttering sanctuaries were located in Sambor Village with at least 176 monuments (www.tourismcambodia.com). Some Sambor Prei Kuk's temples are completely "dressed" by trees and roots, which in the course of the years, are "sculptured" all around and enclose some temples as vegetable octopuses (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).

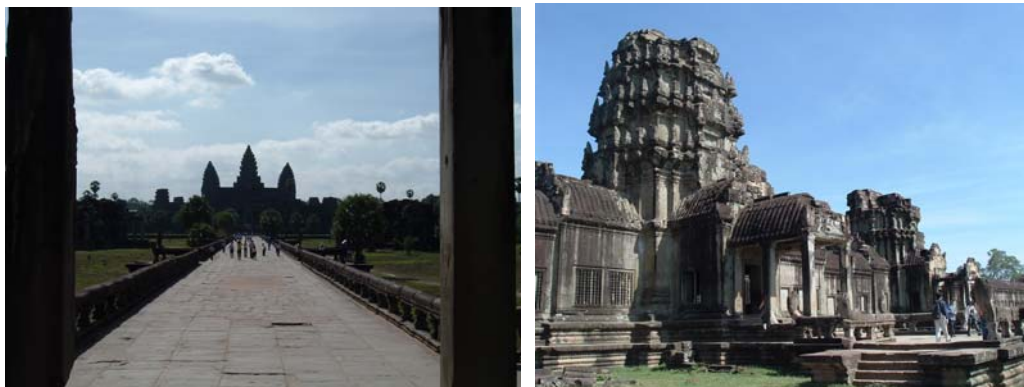


Source: www.tourismcambodia.com

After the visit of the most beautiful examples of the art Pre-Angkorien, we depart to Siem Reap Angkor Wat, a 5 hour drive. On the way to **Siem Reap**, there are many interesting phenomenon to appreciate including clay pottery shops on the cart pulled by buffalos, stone craft shops that sell statues of god, Apsara and Jayavarman VII. Life along the street is full up of beliefs emphasizing upon the creation of local traditional art. This clearly represents the local charm of Cambodia at the first place. Siem Reap has colonial and Chinese-style architecture in the Old French Quarter and around the Old Market. Nowadays, Siem Reap offers a wide range of hotels, restaurants, pubs and shops including several upscale hotels and dozens of budget guesthouses. There are many opportunities to experience traditional Cambodia including Apsara's dance performances, craft shops and silk farms, road tours through rice-paddy countryside,

boat trips on the great Tonle Sap Lake to fishing villages and bird sanctuary (www.canbypublications.com). In the late afternoon, we will go on Angkor site for a look of Angkor Wat from outside and appreciate the nice sunset on Angkor Wat and temples.

Angkor Wat is a World Heritage Site officially designated by UNESCO as the Angkor Archaeological Park that hides the myth of the past era towards architecture and artifacts covered approximately the area of 1,200 rai. Angkor Wat is a massive three-tiered pyramid crowned by five beehive-like towers and is the centrepiece of any visit to the temples of Angkor. Other temples of the same and style period include Thommanon, Banteay Samre, Wet Atwea and Beng Melea, which may have served as a prototype to Angkor Wat. A moat and an exterior wall measuring 1300 meters x 1500 meters surrounded Angkor Wat. The temple itself is 1 km square and consists of three levels surmounted by a central tower. The walls of the temple are covered inside and out with has-reliefs and carvings that explained the strong relationships in philosophy between human and god. Nearly 2000 distinctively rendered Apsara carvings adorn the walls throughout the temple and represent some of the finest examples of apsara carvings in Angkorian era art (www.angkorholiday.com). Angkor Wat could be the fine root to study about history of the Mekong region as it possesses the long trace of story that is mutually related to the civilization of neighbouring countries.



Bayon Angkor Thom (Big Angkor) is a 3km walled royal city and was the last capital of the Angkorian Empire. Bayon is set at the centre of the city. There are five entrances (gates) to the city, one for each cardinal point, and the victory gate leading to the Royal Palace area. Each gate, as well as much of Jayavarman VII'S architecture is crowned with 4 giant faces. The South Gate of Angkor Thom is often the first stop on a tour of the temples. The giant stone faces of Bayon have become one of the most recognizable images connected to classic Khmer art and architecture. There are 37 standing towers, most but not all sporting four carved faces oriented toward the cardinal points. (www.angkorholiday.com).



After the fresh breakfast at hotel, we visit the enchanting **Banteay Srey**. Banteay Srey, translated as 'citadel of the women', is a modern designation, discovered by French archaeologists relatively late in 1914, that probably refers to the delicate beauty of the carvings built at a time when the Khmer Empire was gaining significant power and territory. Banteay Srey displays some of the finest examples of classical Khmer art. The walls are densely covered with some of the most beautiful, deep and intricate carvings of any Angkorian temple. The temple's relatively small size, pink sandstone construction and ornate design give it a fairyland ambiance. The colors are best before 10:30 AM and after 2:00, but there are fewer tourists in the afternoon (www.angkorholiday.com).



Driving through the countryside and the rice fields alongside the Kulen Mountain range, **Beng Melea** is 50km from Siem Reap. Constructed in the late 11th century temple and a distinctly Angkor Wat style, Beng Melea preceded and may have served as a prototype of sorts for Angkor Wat. Very few carvings or bas-reliefs are evident and may never have existed. The temple has been neglected and is still seldom visited. The galleries, pools, libraries and sanctuaries lie under fig-tree roots and creepers, waiting to be discovered. In many places tree roots look like the tentacles of a giant octopus (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).



Source: www.travel.webshots.com

Banteay Chhama is about 23 km from the provincial capital of Sisophon and 3 hours by road from Siem Reap-Angkor. A rarely visited temple, it is located deep in the Cambodian jungle near the Thai border. Surrounding temples include Prasat Mebon, Prasat Taphrom, Prasat Samnang Tasok, Prasat Banteay Toap and Prasat Ta Preav, But

very little is known about it. Built over nine square kilometres and surrounded by a moat, the site echoes the architectural layout of the better-known Khmer temple complexes of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. The site is renowned for its beautifully rendered bas-reliefs, which depict the war between the Khmer and Champa kingdoms and the accession of the Khmer king (www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org).



Preah Vihear is bordered by Siem Reap to the Southwest. The major attractions at Preah Vihear starts with 162 stone step with a short set of stairs decorated with nagas and Gopura I. A 500-meter gently climbing avenue leads up to Gopura II and the courtyard of Gopura III. The short causeway decorated with nagas leads to the inevitable Gopura IV and behind it the second courtyard. On the other side of the courtyard is Gopura V, and beyond it the Main Sanctuary, the centerpiece of the site which now houses a miniature Buddhist temple (www.wikitravel.org).



Koh Ker, the Capital of the Khmer Empire for a very brief period from the year 928 to 944 AD, is another destination that visitors should not miss exploring. Koh Ker is

located in barren hill country northeast of Angkor, in the province of Preah Vihear (www.btinternet.com). Koh Ker is in a distant jungle location with up to a hundred ruined temples including a huge stepped pyramid, which is the largest in the region. More ancient temples are being found in the jungle so there is a true sense of discovery here. Many of the temples were built in brick using a mortar made from tree sap. The chief monument at Koh Ker was the magnificent temple of Prasat Thom. The unique style of the Koh Ker period shows Khmer architecture and sculpture on a monumental scale (www.btinternet.com).



Source: www.adybrouwer.co.uk, www.asiatravel-cambodia.com

To discover more about the resources of Cambodia, the area of northeastern Cambodia comprising Rattanakiri, Mondulkiri, Streung Treng and Kratie is blessed with the beautiful landscapes, pristine nature and colourful cultures of ethnic minority groups. **Rattanakiri** boasts some of the most beautiful landscapes and is home to several settlements of ethnic hill tribes. . It has also many interesting natural sites that are unique to the territory. There is an incredibly beautiful waterfall, a tranquil volcanic lake and a dense rain forest rich in a variety of flora and fauna. Each tribe has its own territory and town structure, some of these are hidden deep in the jungle making it even more interesting for the tourist since getting there means trekking and this can be done on elephant rides as well. (www.hotelscambodia.org). The major attractions in Rattanakiri are Yeak Loam Lake, Eisey Patamak Mountain, Katieng Waterfall, Ou'Sean Lair waterfall,

Ou'Sensranon waterfall, Cha Ung waterfall, Veal Rum Plan (Stone field), Virachay National Park and Lumphat Wildlife Sanctuary.



Source: www.angkorjourney.asievoyage.org

Depart by tourist bus that will take around 4 hours to **Sihanouk Ville**. Sihanouk Ville is Cambodian finest beach resort and it offers an exceptionally well-preserved natural environment. This tropical beach with pristine clear water and glittering white sand is naturally decorated by splendid rock formations. There are several beaches in Sihanouk Ville but the most popular and developed one is O Chheu Teal beach. There are some other beaches sprawling along the coast but they are not as well developed, such as Chmkar Dong and Thmar Thom beaches. The popular beaches: Victoria, Independence, Sokha, O Chheu Teal, and O Tres (www.travel-cambodia.com).



The next destination is **Kampot**. The paradise here comes in the form of 1040 meters high Bokor Mountain. Bokor Hill station used to be one of the most popular recreational places during the French colonial period. The resort was established in the

1920s. On top of the mountain, an old Catholic Church built in French colonial style, hotel and a casino are all abandoned to the wind, leaving evidence of past glory to the place. There are holiday villas and a Buddhist monastery built on the verge of the mountain cliff. A magnificent panoramic view of the Gulf of Siam can be seen from up here. The trip up the mountain provides a completely different travel experience (www.hotelcambodia.org).



Source: www.kampot.sihanoukville-cambodia.com, www.kheussler.de

Also in Kampot, is **Kep city** established in 1908 (www.hotelscambodia.org). From the turn of the century through the 1960s, Kep was Cambodia's premier beach town," drawing weekend holidaymakers to its picturesque shores, and sporting the ocean side villas of the privileged class. Kep is popular holiday destination to both local and foreign tourists. Nowadays, the old villas are in ruins and the town is known more for its oceanfront seafood stalls than for its beaches, which are narrow and stony, offering just a few slivers of sand (www.canbypublications.com). There is a regular crab market that itself serves well as a tour-attraction as fishermen come onto the beach with baskets after baskets of freshly caught crabs attracting a huge gathering of interested buyers (www.hotelcambodia.org).



Source: www.en.wikipedia.org

What I still want to do in Cambodia is to make a journey from Battambang to Siem Reap by boat. I imagine villages where local people welcome the visitors with the warm smiles as well as the remote areas with beautiful landscape. I promise myself that I will go back to Cambodia again.....the mythical region that is waiting for me out there.

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ARTICLE 3

ASEAN IMAGE POSITIONING: THE CASE STUDY OF CAMBODIA

ASEAN IMAGE POSITIONING: THE CASE STUDY OF CAMBODIA

Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak

Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism

Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus

E-mail: sukwan@phuket.psu.ac.th

Tel: 089-645-3539

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth rates of tourism are increasingly placing pressure on the countries where proper image positioning of tourism and precise theme of tourism products are not clearly and appropriately defined and promoted. The product lines offered by the member countries of the ASEAN are comparable. Then, the research was designed to identify the existing image position and the distinctive identities of Cambodia with the purpose of projecting the highlighted promotional theme of tourism products differently from the competitors. The study identified that Cambodia should make a distinction itself toward the conveyed message based on cultural and heritage prosperity as an icon for promoting its tourism. Consequently, the cultural and heritage tourism should be the most appropriate prominent promotional theme to engage the desires for tourists in designing their own alternatives for the voyage to Cambodia.

Key words: The ASEAN, the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), positioning strategy, destination image positioning and Cambodia

INTRODUCTION

Since the formalization of the Association of Southeast Asian countries (ASEAN) cooperation in tourism in 1976, travel and tourism has rapidly become the important leading sector to strengthen the state economy of the member countries of the ASEAN. Although the ASEAN is considered to be the most successful international alliances among developing countries, the organization's achievements in the area of regional economic cooperation including tourism have been weak (Timothy, 1998 as cited in Tirasatayapitak, 2005). Consequently, the ASEAN tourism integration cannot be subjectively established and accomplished if there is a lack of the sincere and serious cooperation among the ASEAN member countries, the collaborative networks between tourism business sectors at national and international levels and the pooled data bank in tourism that could be possibly accessed and extracted for implementation in each destination.

Cambodia, accredited as a state partnership of the ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Sub-region, employs tourism as a locomotive means to help develop the economic system from an agriculture-based economy to a modern-oriented industrialized economy. The goals on tourism development are to ensure the development of tourism activities that meet the needs of local communities and respect the environment and the main direction offers priority to tourism investment and pro-poor investment as core policies (MOT, 2003). Though the tourism policy provides the statement of government's approach to sustainable tourism development, mass tourism is often the prime scene of tourism practice in the major tourist attractions of Cambodia. The progressive expansion of tourism generates many forms of tourism-related businesses to satisfy the tourist's demand as much as possible, especially in the core tourist destinations. The competition in tourism industry between Cambodia as the newborn destination and other ASEAN countries is becoming more serious when the

products lines accessible are comparable with similar tourism resources as ingredients. Modern facilities are well accepted by the developers with the expectation to show the potential and readiness in providing services at international standard level to tourists and are competitive with other destinations. As a consequence, this results a similar tourism image positioning in marketing scheme in the tourists' perceptions for the ASEAN countries.

In reference to forces that enhance growth of tourism in the decade of globalization and environmental movement, the new tourists become more responsible, sophisticated and information-intensive consumer. Given the information technology has been greatly improved, this driven force benefits tourists to investigate without difficulty the country information, choices and modes of travel, tourism products of each destination and options, which enhance the appeal and image of holiday taking.

Consistent with the review of tourism development context, tourism business in Cambodia has gradually experienced the positive progress in terms of tourism receipts and tourist arrivals. At the same time, the tourism industries in Cambodia are not currently well coordinated. Proper image positioning of tourism and precise theme of tourism products have yet to be clearly and appropriately defined and promoted. Hence, strong and efficient support for tourism development from private and public agents is very much necessarily required. Given the crucial challenge to productively harmonize the mutual benefits in tourism among all stakeholders involved and to lessen the high degree of business competition due to standardization and likeness of tourism products and tourism image positioning of countries offered to the potential targets suggests the needs to study the current situation of tourism development and the image position of Cambodia. For that reason, this paper is therefore structured into five sections.

1. The paper begins with the methodology of study.
2. It next describes a scenario of trends in tourism volume of Cambodia in the context of the ASEAN.
3. Some conceptual features of destination image positioning are discussed.
4. It next discusses the tourism development policies, product development strategies, assessment of current tourism development in Cambodia toward SWOT analysis and image positioning of Cambodia tourism.
5. The paper concludes with a summary of recommendations for positioning Cambodia tourism image.

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the research aim to study in detail the considerable aspects facing the current situation of tourism development in Cambodia towards the SWOT analysis and to propose the image position for Cambodia tourism. A framework of questions was drawn up based upon the objectives of the study. In order to accomplish these objectives, the personal in-depth interviews and focus group discussion in the direction of the cross-sectional approach were the main method of primary data collection from the targeted key informants. Documentary data were also used to support analysis. Purposive selection was used to target the group of key informants needed for in-depth interviews and discussion. The key informants were selected from public and private tourism-related institutions in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Judgment for inclusion was guided by the criteria in the context of selection of information sources. The group of key informants was representatives from Marketing and Promotion Department and International Cooperation and the ASEAN Department of Ministry of Tourism and Cambodia Association of Travel Agents in Cambodia. The semi-structured interviews were constructed as the qualitative research tool.

SCENARIO OF TOURISM VOLUME OF CAMBODIA IN THE CONTEXT OF ASEAN

Cambodia, internationally known as the Khmer Empire, is rich in its heritage, natural beauty and vast pristine seashores. Cambodia has considerable potential for tourism development and has shown the gradually increasing in number of tourist arrivals since 1999. In comparison with other countries in the ASEAN region, Thailand is essentially a capitalist system. Myanmar has a centrally planned militarized style of government while Cambodia may be situated between these two extremes of market orientation (www.asispacificprojects.com).

As figured in Table 1, the growth rate of head-count arrivals for some ASEAN countries in 2004 was noticeably increasing at a decreasing rate compared to 2003. For instance, Laos's arrival grew by 7.73%, followed by Cambodia by 8.20% and Vietnam by 13.79%. Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam are in big demand in terms of visited destinations. The overall average annual percentage growth rate (AAGR%) for arrival numbers is estimated to be uppermost for small destinations from 2000 - 2004 such as Cambodia (6.6%). Remarkably, the overall growth rate of tourist arrivals in the Greater Mekong Sub-region is sizeable as figured in Table 2. For example, earlier Cambodia had recorded the most impressive increase of 41.1 percent (McInerney, 2000) while other member countries have not been too particularly aggressive in seeking foreign expertise and investments for tourism.

Table 1: The Average Annual Growth Rate of Countries in Southeast Asia

Country	2003	2004	2005	00-04 AAGR (%)	03-04 AAGR (%)	04-05 AAGR (%)
Cambodia	701,014	952,546	1,089,771	6.57	8.20	14.41
Indonesia	4,499,831	5,120,724	5,269,604	0.93	1.87	2.91
Laos	636,351	789,547	886,034	4.57	7.73	12.22
Malaysia	10,905,367	13,852,273	14,610,651	3.46	3.50	5.47
Myanmar	205,610	245,501	273,448	4.01	5.92	11.38
Singapore	7,656,330	7,729,484	8,198,750	2.84	6.07	6.07
Thailand	10,082,109	11,980,370	13,065,876	5.57	4.85	9.06
Vietnam	2,428,735	2,927,339	3,130,574	6.25	13.79	6.94
TOTAL	37,115,347	42,597,784	46,524,708	3.79	5.10	6.51

Source: Turner & Witt, 2002 a, b, 2003

Table 2: The Growth Rate of Tourist Arrivals to the GMS 1995-2005

Destination	1995-2002	2003-2004	2004-2005
Cambodia	19.99%	8.2%	9.5%
Laos	11.36%	7.7%	8.1%
Myanmar	6.48%	5.9%	6.8%
Thailand	6.60%	4.9%	5.9%
Vietnam	9.97%	13.8%	17.4%
China	11.22%	10.1%	8.8%

Source: Turner & Witt, 2002b

GMS Country Reports

PATA Annual Statistical Report 2003

WTO Market Trends, 2002.

Cambodia has introduced its steadily improving performance as a tourist destination during the period of ten years from 1996 to the point where the country now has more than 1 million international visitors a year. Visitation rose as a result of increased direct flights to Phnom Penh and Siem Reap from neighboring Asian countries and the re-opening of the prime archeological site at Preah Vihear in northern Cambodia. The quick jump of head counts puts the country on path to reach the 1,055,202 arrivals recorded for 2004 with an increase of 50.53% compared to 2003 when tourism bounced back after a depressing SARS outbreak kept visitors away in 2003 as described in Table 3.

Table 3: Cambodia – Growth Rate 1993-2005

Year	Arrivals	AAGR (%)
2000	466,365	26.82
2001	604,919	29.71
2002	786,524	30.02
2003	701,014	-10.87
2004	1,055,202	50.53
2005	1,421,615	14.41

Note: AAGR is Average Annual Growth Rate.

Source:The Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Country Report of Cambodia 2003

PATA Annual Statistical Report 2003; WTO Market Trends, 2002

Turner & Witt, 2003; <http://www.mot.gov.kh>

In the first half of 2005 compared to the same period of 2004, tourist arrivals in Cambodia jumped 38.4 percent to 682,431 with the percentage of change 34.72 percent between the period of 2004 and 2005. The international tourist arrivals to

Cambodia by air in 2004 reached 626,121. From January – May 2005, the international arrivals to Cambodia by air have reached 349,960. This showed an increase of 30.92% and 59.62% of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap Airport compared to the same period of 2004. The most important tourist destination is still reserving for Siem Reap, which welcomed 676,809 tourists for 2005 (www.embassyofcambodia.org.nz). Dramatically, the progress of domestic tourism has been single out for its leading role of internal economic movement and manifestly contributing to poverty alleviation. In 2004, there were more than two million domestic visitors with an augmentation of USD 100 millions to the national revenue (MOT, 2006).

Regarding the tourism market to Cambodia, Cambodia can be seen to benefit receiving more international visitors from Asia and the Pacific reported the largest portion totaling of 596,361 in 2004, increased 42.83% over the previous year of 2003 while the visitors from Europe, America and Middle East amounted 242,812, 122,169, and 93,860 with an increase of 32.43%, 37.79% and 18.45% respectively. Japan was expected to improve its market share to become the third most important market after China by 2004. Cambodia was most popular over the first half of 2005 with South Koreans at 14.9 percent of all visitors, following by Japanese at 8.8 percent, US nationals at 8.1 percent, the United Kingdom at 5.1 percent, and Australia at 3.35 percent. Tourist arrivals on holiday shared the biggest number. Arrivals via direct flights to Siem Reap made up 29.0 percent of the total, up slightly on the year 2004 at 26.3 percent (MOT, 2005). Cambodia's government is trying to persuade tourists to stay longer and visit more tourist attractions than the World Heritage temple complex of Angkor Wat.

As tourism is one of the only sources of foreign exchange for Cambodia, the government is aiming to receive two million tourists to Cambodia by 2008. Following this growth trend, there will be more than three million tourists visiting this country, including two million who will particularly visit Siem Reap Angkor by 2010 (www.embassyofcambodia.org.nz).

DESTINATION IMAGE POSITIONING

Tourism industry, as an industry based on imagery (Buck, 1993 as cited in Laws, 1995), spends the high amount of money in the attempt to build an illustration for the country's destinations (Ross, 1998). Destination could be seen as an assortment of products, including attractions, accommodations, services, tour packages and activities for tourists, which are the key elements in the market offering. The destination as a product brings together all aspects of tourism such as demand, transportation, supply and marketing. Then, the destination can be defined as the focus of facilities and services designed to meet the need of the tourist (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998).

The tourism destinations provide a convenient focus for the examination of the tourist movement and its impact and significance. They are places with some forms of actual or perceived boundary, political boundary and market-created boundary. The desire to become a recognized destination presents a difficult marketing challenge (Kotler, Brown & Makens, 2003). The relations between destinations and visitors from their country of origin will be primarily influenced through the process of tourism development and destination marketing. Destination marketing is an essential part of developing and retaining a particular location's popularity. As such, a destination should develop products, tangible and intangible aspects to meet the market demands (Weaver & Lawton, 2002).

Some fundamentals within the destination largely conclude travelers' choice and influence their buying motivation. They are destination attractions and environment, destination facilities, accessibility of the destination, images of the destination and price to the travelers (Middleton, 1994). Image of destinations plays a decisive role in the travel decision process to stimulate such consumption and to attract visitors to destinations (Laws, 1995). Destination image could be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, impression and feelings components that people hold of a destination (Crompton,

1979 as cited in Gartner, 1996), including three different components of the product such as quality of attraction or cost, the hosts' behavior and attitude and the environment, weather, scenery and facilities (Milman & Pizam, 1995).

Images can establish a meaningful position in the public's mind as being a place, which is different from other destinations offering similar primary attractions (Laws, 1991). Destination can claim a position in the market for their services by emphasizing selected attributes such as the benefits, which a particular destination offers to tourists, or by drawing contrasts with competitors. Such image must be supported by everything that the destination says and does. Brand image should express a distinctive message that communicates the product's major benefits and positioning (Kotler et al, 2003).

In the process of considering the image, valuable new marketing ideas emerge. The three steps in establishing an effective position are analyzing destination by identifying the major features and benefits, identifying the current position and image and comparing the current position with the marketing objectives. It is necessary to answer the two questions of what is the appeal of the destination and what characteristics of product or destination are being marketed as part of the current position in order to clarify the current position. Depending on what the destination has found, the destination may need to adjust its position and image or the destination may alternatively need to change the product to meet the needs and expectations of visitors or to attract a different market whose expectation can be met or else it is necessary for repositioning and new image development (Burke & Resnick, 2000). However, to achieve the image development positioning that a destination creates is to design the accurate and distinct message to maximize the appeal of destination's image and maintain a positive relationship with the region and its offering.

CAMBODIA AND ITS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Tourism in Cambodia has been accepted as a means to recover the declining economy since the government of Prince Sihanouk in 1969. In the national development context, the National Social and Economic Development (NSED) Plan has a significant influence on the nature of tourism development in Cambodia (MOT, 2003). The direction of plan clearly identifies the primary development goal of the country to reduce poverty. It recognizes that poverty reduction can be achieved through sustainable economic development and growth. In the plan, tourism is seen as a key dynamic in the national economy that can help much to alleviate poverty and provide better income opportunities for indigenous.

Cambodia encounters a number of major issues that can affect the success of tourism industry. The NSED Plan recognizes that action must be taken in infrastructure development, product development, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and economic development through the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises. Cambodia aims to use tourism development that is primarily based on culture and nature to provide maximum benefits for the Cambodians by ensuring the best possible level of economic contribution and equitable distribution from tourism consistent with protection of resources (ESCAP, 1997). The existing tourism development plan (the Cambodian National Tourism Development Plan 2001-2005) designed as a comprehensive plan provides medium-term objectives based on present government policies such as to generate awareness among the government and citizens about the contribution of tourism in sustainable development, to assist in diversifying Cambodia's tourism product away from Angkor Wat to another area and to adopt a destination management model to develop the key destinations of Cambodia (Tirasatayapitak, 2005). However, Cambodia copes with important challenges in capitalizing on its culture and its people, maintaining its natural and cultural heritage,

generating economic activity to reduce poverty while attracting adequate tourists to country.

Tourism product development strategy

Regarding to the Cambodian National Tourism Development Plan 2001-2005 (MOT, 2003 as cited in Tirasatayapitak, 2005), the development concept is emphasized upon the awareness of tourism potential of the cultural and natural resources. The improvement of tourism products is in different stages. One of the challenges is to ensure that the product development is appropriate to the existing conditions of each place. The tourism development strategy captures on the approach of establishing tourism zones with a cluster of different types of attractions and a unique tourism theme appropriate to each zone as promoted in the following 4 geographic zones:

1. Phnom Penh and surrounding areas (Greater Phnom Penh)

These areas offer tourism of the capital, Phnom Penh, mixed with cultural, historical, commercial and political attractions.

2. Siem Reap and the Angkor complex

Siem Reap is considered a center for historical and cultural tourism. This area is designated as a World Heritage site. Destinations in the cultural zone are the Angkor complex and Siem Reap's surrounding temples. These destinations are the high priority historical and archaeological sites of the country.

3. Sihanouk Ville and Koh Kong (coastal zone areas)

The provinces along the coast of Cambodia are Koh Kong, Kep, Sihanouk Ville and Kampot. There are many marine tourism resources lined up on the southwestern coast of Cambodia. Among all provinces, Sihanouk Ville is considered as a center for coastal tourism.

4. Northeastern Eco-tourism area

This tourism zone is comprised of 4 provinces: Mondolkiri, Rattanakiri, Stung Treng and Kratie. The target areas of Mondolkiri and Rattanakiri are considered as a centre for eco-tourism.

In order to support the development of tourism zones, the Plan explains that the cultural tourism is the best developed at present and will continue to be the primary tourism product. It has a noteworthy competitive advantage. There are two major dimensions to the cultural product including the Angkor Wat and the temple sites as well as the living culture. Cultural tourism is regarded as a major force in tourism planning and development. The Plan indicates that this type of product requires multidisciplinary participation to deal with the pressure of preserving culture and using it as a means of generating income. The carrying capacity and conservation are of utmost importance in developing cultural heritage tourism. It is therefore essential that Cambodia employ an integrated professional approach to dealing with various dimensions of its cultural heritage. The other products such as festivals and events, handicrafts, village tourism and eco/ nature-based tourism can be seen as developing but at the current stage they have little potentially to contribute to overall tourism in the country.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA

The ASEAN region is physically prosperous in cultural, historical and natural features. Cambodia exploits the assortment of tourism resources in its country for development of various tourism products and activities. However, Cambodia offers indifferently the tourism resources comparing to other countries in the region to compete in the tourism business. The situation facing the tourism development and the image positioning in Cambodia can be evaluated by a detailed consideration of strengths and weaknesses of its current operations and from the environmental influences for threats

and opportunities. Assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is a universally employed practice to analyze development potential and current management of an area. The conclusion of a SWOT analysis, which reviews the tourism development and potential positioning of tourism image in Cambodia, is as follows set forth.

Cambodia is rich in assortment of the cultural and historical heritages and natural coastal features. There are a bundle of pristine attractions that have yet to be developed and promoted. These places possess high potential of unique natural attractions, biodiversity and well associated with culture for the development as tourist attractions in the future, for instance, extensive mostly undeveloped white sandy beaches on the mainland and offshore islands in the southern coastal areas of Cambodia. Cambodia holds a specific characteristic based on its resources and market image. Though people well recognize this country from the glorious world heritage site of Angkor Wat, the country alternatively offers attractions to visit ranging from 29 historical attractions, 6 archeological sites, 6 natural attractions and specific topography of Great Lake and the Mekong River. All these 41 tourists attractions are mainly located in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Kampong Thom. In addition, Cambodia also has festivals and cultural events that appeal tourists to experience.

The major tourist destinations in Cambodia have been developed and promoted as “The Jewel of Mekong” in various characteristics to serve the needs and interests of the target markets. These attractions hold high potential to be promoted as multi-tourism circuits linking with destinations in other member countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region such as Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Main tourism areas are as follows:

-Phnom Penh: the capital city and its surrounding include Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum, Toul Sleng Museum, Udong, Tonle Bati, Phnom Chiso, Mekong River.

-Siem Reap: home of Cambodia's famous Angkor Wat complex is the main tourism draw card and the most visited place in Cambodia. The ancient World Heritage listed Angkor Wat temples have played a key role in opus destiny for over 1000 years. Today they still

present some of the greatest challenges and opportunities for cultural tourism and the international community.

-Coastal zone: Sihanouk Ville, Koh Kong, Kep, Kompot, the premier beach resort

-Eco-tourism in the northeast provinces, Ratanakiri, Monduliri & Stoeung Treng.

Cambodia furthermore offers the important cluster of attractions including Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Kratie and Stung Treng that are significant to complementarily promote the tourism network of attractions in the group of the Jewel of Mekong. These features are suitable to diversify the development of tourism products and activities away from Siem Reap to other areas of country. The main attraction in the southern coast as Sihanouk Ville has a relative proximity and good road access to Phnom Penh. This area provides the scenic beauty of the city environment setting and scenic offshore islands, which is a good marine area for diving and fishing as well as for developing cruise ship tourism. The southern coast of Cambodia is connecting with the coastal areas of its neighbors as Thailand and Vietnam. Cambodia would gain the benefits from the tourists' visit in the area and the integration of tourism development.

The government of Cambodia has positioned tourism as a high priority in the national development plan. A progressive pro-tourism policy, namely the more liberated open sky policy, a strong and stable government commitment to create a business-friendly environment and the investment reforms has been launched to promote tourism as the foremost instrument to enhance economic development, alleviate poverty and provide better income opportunities to the residents. Such tourism development policy from the government significantly stimulates the expansion of tourism development and investment in all dimensions. The more liberated open sky policy can facilitate the opening of airway routes, the tourist flows to the country and help promote international tourism and provide more access to country.

Cambodia widely opens for business and investment which offers overseas and local companies attractive and competitive incentives in terms of relaxation of investment application form, investment laws, and taxation barriers in line with establishment of political stability, infrastructure and human resources. According to the investment reforms, a new and relaxed foreign investment law allows a 70-year land lease to attract more joint-venture hotel projects. The new law also offers eight-year tax incentives, which allows the foreign companies to freely repatriate profits and import overseas staff for joint ventures.

The government takes initiatives and concentrates in the development and construction of tourism infrastructure, roads, access to tourist sites, airports, harbors, recreation centers, eco-tourism sites and other major related tourism development. Several road projects are in progress of construction under the assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB) such as road no. 2 from the Vietnam border via Takeo Province to Phnom Penh, road no. 5, 6 from Skun to Siem Reap and from Thai border to Siem Reap, road no.7 in Eastern Cambodia and road from Thnal Totoeung via Snoul to Kratie. Some projects will commence soon such as road to Laos border via Stung Treng and road no. 78 from the Vietnam border to Ratanakiri.

The current operation of tourism development in Cambodia is dynamic because Cambodia is situated in the good geographic location. Cambodia sits on major trade lanes and has access to major gateways of Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City (www.un.org.kh). In supporting tourism development, human resources are very crucial to be developed. The government officials are sent for undertaking the training courses abroad such as in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and Europe. Significantly, Cambodia is working closely with neighboring countries, namely Thailand, Vietnam and Laos to open up more international borders and to facilitate border-crossing procedures between these countries and Cambodia.

Even if Cambodia possesses the potential internal strengths to develop tourism in various aspects, the decisive issues in operation and management have played vital roles as obstacles to tourism growth and achievement of development missions. Practically the same as often taking place in the developing countries, natural resources are lack of awareness in preserving and extensively consumed. There is a lack of simultaneous planning and strict control for exploiting natural resources. This causes many damages to the environment of many protected areas. Cambodia is facing the barrier of limited effectiveness of management in terms of the use of tourism resources and cooperation in developing tourism products.

Lack of funds is one of the crucial issues for Cambodia. The country does not have adequate financial resources to develop basic infrastructure, which can meet the requirement of economic development and tourism development such as the accessibility, communication system and development of tourism circuits and attractions. Insufficient basic infrastructure and facilities for tourism, for example; water supply, electric power, waste management, telecommunications, poor existing airport facilities and very limited air access crucially affect the promotion and the operation of tourism in other areas of country besides Angkor Wat, Phnom Penh and Sihanouk Ville. Recently, the significant growth of tourism development is largely centered on Angkor Wat. This would be an obstacle to development of basic infrastructure and allocation of funds. Some tourism activities such as adventure tourism cannot be promoted for the reasons of safety and security. The transportation networks in Cambodia do not provide many options to all varieties of rich natural and cultural attractions throughout the country that would affects the promotion and development of tourist attractions. Therefore, the infrastructural accessibility including the frequency and quality of transportation linkages between destinations of origin with Cambodia need to be urgently expanded.

Cambodia needs more systematic tourism development and management with participation and cooperation from public, private and all stakeholders involved. It is obviously seen that the ownership, concession and expectation of land are of concern for tourism operation and development in Cambodia. Cambodia is facing the barriers in management, the tourism economic leakages occurring from the use of an imported skilled workforce and luxury products and money spent on marketing. There are no clear policies that encourage the use of domestic products and services for the tourism industry. The most supplies and equipments have been imported from Thailand, Vietnam, China and Korea. In addition, the energy is expensive and widely unavailable in rural areas. Then, the operating costs are passed on to the guests. This makes Cambodia a more expensive and less competitive destination than its neighbors. (www.un.org.kh). Hence, the systematic planning for long-term scale needs to be focused.

Cambodia has a tourism development plan implemented for all areas of the country but implementation needs to be accelerated. The current development is mainly based on the top-down policy. Promoting readiness of local administrations in order to transfer the responsibility of management from the central government to their hands is lacking. The appropriate vision, planning and management for the whole tourism system are critical. People do not have good knowledge and understanding of tourism. The involvement from local communities and local officials in the process of tourism development and management is low, especially in the decision-making process and controlling the areas. The appropriate coordination in management between the central government agencies and local administrative firms is needed.

Seasonality is a major influence on tourism industry. Monsoon rains detract from year-round tourism. Tourism competition in the country is high. The pricing system is still critical and lacks of standards. Cutting down prices is often used as the major marketing strategy to attract more businesses. Product prices are high and variable. The promotion and marketing have encountered the current huge differences in the available

accommodation capacity and standard of services and quality comparing to other more developed countries in the region such as Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. Crucially, there is a lack of collection of reliable information on present and potential tourist attractions, a comprehensive marketing research and development strategy in order to better plan and develop tourism activities. Tourism product diversities, quality and alternatives has not been competently presented and integrated into the tourism markets. The value-added tourism products are not yet designed to lengthen tourists' period of stay in Cambodia. The number of competitive tourism products is still limited. Marketing and promotion and branding have yet to meet the demand of the present prospective markets. It will degrade the overall quality of service standards and competencies to carry on Cambodia's competitiveness among destinations in the region.

In reference with human resources and society, Cambodia is one nation where poverty appears to be falling rather slowly though economic growth is reasonably rapid. Measured poverty has been reduced but poverty levels in Cambodia remain slightly change. An unskilled and uneducated labor force is one of the major deficiencies. Cambodia found short of experienced human resources working in tourism or alternatively the funds to train the new employees. Cambodia is also facing the shortage of highly trained and qualified persons who can carry out well the cooperative marketing. The human resource base for tourism will not be improved within the short period of time.

In the context of tourism development, the potential external opportunities considerably influence the rapid development of tourism industry in Cambodia. Globalization, peace, cooperation and development in technology rapidly develop world tourism, which illustrates the tourist demand toward South East Asia and Pacific. In addition, the peaceful atmosphere and regional political stability helps stimulate the growth of tourism development and enhances the potential opportunity for investment in tourism. The development of basic infrastructure and facilities throughout the region

contributes the dispersion of tourism growth. Additionally, the high volume of visitor arrivals and growth rate of tourism development in the neighboring countries provide a high possibility to exchange tourist with other member countries and integrate in the regional development policy as a partner of single tourist destination.

The overall commitment to a sub-regional tourism development agenda among six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region remains strong. The countries in the region are seeking for the collaboration in order to enhance the tourism in the region when they have exploited the connecting tourism resources. The effective collaboration on tourism development among countries in the region such as the East-West Economic Corridor will be the significant opportunity for mutual tourism development to provide the possibility for the development of the overland route transportation, rapid infrastructure development such as accommodations and transportation networks and create the multi-tourism circuits and expand the product lines. There is a high possibility to exchange tourist flows with other member countries and integrate in the regional development policy as a partner of single tourist destination. Promoting the Greater Mekong Sub-region as single destination based on a bundle of cultural and natural products will hearten a sense of mission among stakeholders in all countries concerned to partake in sub-regional tourism promotion and development activities. The strategy to develop and promote the priority tourism zones and touring circuits along the Mekong River that contains most of the sub-region's major tourism resources has the potential to make a substantial contribution to mutual sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

Lastly, the international acceptance from ASEAN, GMS, WTO, PATA, CLMT, CLMTV, and ACMECS significantly enhances the positive image of Cambodia and provides more opportunities and the assistance in cooperative development in tourism.

In opposition, Cambodia is encountering the environmental influences of threats that delay the tourism expansion in the country. For example, Cambodia is facing high competition from other well-developed beach resort areas and new born destinations in

Southeast Asia. The competition between the destinations all over the world is increasingly serious since these countries aim at tourism as a means to boost the economic mechanism and retain the existing shares in the markets. Then, the search for new potential buyers is becoming intense. The development of basic infrastructure such as road connections in the region takes too long time and the energy shortage may cause the high cost in investment and tourism business operation. Higher petroleum prices have a difficult impact on the Cambodian economy. It is impossible to deny that the difficulty in empowering the investment from the regional economic system in the development affects from the disparity of development of monetary and banking system in each country.

In relation to marketing schemes, the market segmentation, positioning and branding practices of the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region are not clearly defined. The marketing capabilities of most GMS national tourism organizations are limited in terms of the weak destination marketing management, capacities and lack of adequate funding. The conflict of interests in sharing tourism resources pool among member countries in the region still remains and this may be a result of incorrect assumption that the tourist going to another country are actually tourists who would come to their own country.

The crucial difference in standard quality of products, services and prices greatly affects the tourists' satisfaction. The balance between economic development and environmental degradation is going to be crucial. The inability to implement sustainable development principles and practices at the natural and cultural resource management level and at the community level may cause the potentially adverse environmental impacts. Furthermore, the effective pro-poor tourism development principles and practices as well as the assurance that all stakeholders in the regional tourism system are engaged in the process to maximize the commitment are still not applied. The tourism industry's contribution to poverty alleviation, gender equity and

sustainable development is restricted and the reimbursement is disproportionately distributed all through the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

PROMOTING CAMBODIA TOURISM THROUGH IMAGE POSITIONING

In regard to the feature of image positioning of Cambodia tourism, there are as expected similarities in expressed opinions among respondents that the existing image position of tourism in Cambodia is similar to the ASEAN neighboring countries. It can discuss that the similar point of view on this matter possibly relates to similar tourism resources offered, comparable stereotype of tourism products that generally comprise natural, historical and cultural attractions, local culture and the ways of life, native customs, and religious rituals as the key ingredients of package tours.

As can be seen from the results of study, all respondents do strongly believe that cultural and heritage prosperity could be used as a symbol for promoting Cambodia tourism at the highest level, followed by the beauty of nature at a high level. Though Cambodia possesses the beautiful coasts, beaches and natural areas, these attractions have yet to be promoted to the markets. This could be the problem of market acceptance at the early stage and serious competition between the destinations all over the world. Subsequently, the image of the special interest tourism seems to be crucially preserved as a dominant scene for tourism development in Cambodia due to the legacy of Angkor Wat. These results support the study of Tirasatayapitak (2005) which mentioned that tourists are primarily appealed to Cambodia by reason of the allure of historical and archeological sites at the highest level, followed by art, architecture and culture of the Khmer's civilization at a high level. If comparing the consequences of the two studies on factor or brand image that appeals tourists to visit Cambodia with tourist activities which influence tourists to experience and use services of this state, the cultural and heritage prosperity dominantly shows its priority and potential as a valuable

message from this glorious region in the tourists' perception for decades when they first decide on activity.

To marketing the destination, the cultural and heritage tourism is approved to be the most appropriate promotional theme of tourism products in Cambodia. Additionally, the natural and cultural tourism activity could also be used as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to this country while health tourism, sport and recreational tourism and shopping tourism gain the low interests to be used as a positioning statement. Eco-tourism and soft adventure fairly attract and challenge visitors who visit this country. This suggests that visitors still question about the convenience of tourist facilities and services related to these products and safety and security of sites in some areas. When planning to visit Cambodia, Angkor Wat will be the prime attraction that is a MUST to visit once in lifetime.

Based on the above-recommended promotional themes, Cambodia has offered an array of choices of attractions that provide opportunity for the cultural and heritage tourism and the natural and cultural tourism. With respect to such major promotional themes of cultural and heritage tourism, the fashionable presented attractions comprise Siem Reap Angkor Wat, Preah Vihear, Sombo Prei Kuk, Phnom Penh and surroundings. The new attractions, which have potential in being developed for tourism to serve up such theme, are Koh Ker, Phnom Da, Boeng Melea and Banteay Chhama. North-eastern Cambodia, Sihanouk Ville, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong are the tourist destinations that well serve the minor promotional theme of natural and cultural tourism. The innovative attractions with possibility to serve up such minor promotional theme include Tonle Sap Lake, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhanang, Posat and Battambang.

CONCLUSION

Destination image often plays an important role as a distinctive message of mental impression or perceptions of a place, a product and experience with the

destination. This is often a mixture of formation elements including attractions, scenery, hosts, cuisine, culture, peace, security and access that could be received from media, advertisements and word of mouth or from actual visitation. Image positioning is essential in tourism business to promise the competitiveness and success of destinations. Responding to the increase appreciation on the value of image positioning, this paper examined an image positioning for Cambodia tourism. Based on the outcomes of the study, image positioning of Cambodia tourism is similar to other neighboring ASEAN countries. Given to the dominant assortment of cultural heritages of the Khmer's civilization throughout the country, Cambodia should convey the message of current position based on cultural and heritage prosperity that introduces the outstanding of architectures in particular. Cambodia could sharpen its position to compete with other destinations in the tourism markets by emphasizing upon the cultural and heritage tourism as the most appropriate influential promotional theme of tourism products in supporting with the natural and cultural tourism as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to this Angkorian Empire. Hence, positioning the Cambodia tourism relative to its product class and benefits should be the intelligent communicative message and the unique selling proposition in the marketplace for Cambodia.

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ARTICLE 4

ASEAN IMAGE POSITIONING: THE CASE STUDY OF VIETNAM

ASEAN IMAGE POSITIONING: THE CASE STUDY OF VIETNAM

Dr. Aree Tirasatayapitak

Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism

Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus

E-mail: sukwan@phuket.psu.ac.th

Tel: 089-645-3539

ABSTRACT

Destination positioning strategy has been praised as a creative marketing tool to underpin the perceived position through a personality of products, promotional themes and brands on the key benefits and exclusive added values that they could offer better than competitors. Countries in the ASEAN have encountered the critical issues of tourism authenticity and loss of destination uniqueness in their tourism operation due to standardization of tourism products. Then, the research was designed to identify the distinctive identities of Vietnam of how the country should differentiate the image positioning of its tourism. The study has determined an opportunity for Vietnam to distinguish itself toward the apparent position with an identifiable product and attractions based on the unique beauty of nature as a symbol for promoting tourism. The natural and cultural tourism should be the distinct message of the most appropriate influential promotional theme in accompanying with the historic-cultural tourism as a minor promotional theme to influence tourist's perception and influence their desire to travel to Vietnam.

Key words: The ASEAN, the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), positioning strategy, destination image positioning and Vietnam

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, international tourism has been praised as an important and fast growing element of the global trade and as a significant tool to hearten the economic development and to build a wealthier society in all regions of the world. The member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) have well recognized the importance of tourism as an activity for the movement of goods and people, trade and business investment, human resource development and the raising of living standards.

After the formalization of ASEAN cooperation in tourism in 1976, tourism in this region has developed rapidly, especially since 1980. Vietnam has pushed efforts to shift their development from an agriculture-based economy to a modern-oriented industrialized economy. Tourism is then designed as a locomotive apparatus to help achieve such direction of development. As a part of ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Sub-region partnership for regional tourism development, the current practice of tourism in Vietnam emphasizes mostly upon the mono-country development with the competitive economic structure rather than complementary. The prime policy of tourism development for Vietnam in the next five years is to develop tourism in a rapid and sustainable way, to enhance tourism promotion, to develop competitive tourism products with diversity, high quality and traditional cultural identity and to turn Vietnam into a sizeable tourism center in the region (VNAT, 199?).

Since the tourism management, planning and development strategies in Vietnam and other member countries of ASEAN are focused primarily towards marketing and guest emphasized tactics (Choibamroong, 2005), the ASEAN tourism is critical in terms of tourism authenticity and loss of destination identity. It is worthy to note that Vietnam offers similar tourism resources as its neighbors in the region. The competition in tourism industry among destinations in the ASEAN is becoming more serious when they offer comparable stereotype of tourism products that generally comprise natural, historical

and cultural attractions, local culture and the ways of life, native customs, religious rituals and shopping as the key ingredients of such package tours. As a consequence, this results in a similar tourism image positioning in marketing scheme in the tourists' perceptions for these countries. Proper image positioning of tourism and precise theme of tourism products are not clearly and appropriately defined and promoted to productively harmonize the mutual benefits in tourism among all stakeholders involved. The standardization and likeness of tourism products and tourism image positioning of countries in the ASEAN offered to the potential targets suggests the need to study the current situation of tourism development and the image position of how Vietnam should differentiate the image positioning to launch its promotional theme of tourism products as an assortment of the country's highlighted facet.

METHODOLOGY

The study set as its objectives to study in detail the considerable aspects facing the current situation of tourism development in Vietnam towards the SWOT analysis and to propose the image position for Vietnam. A framework of questions was drawn up based upon the objectives of the research. In order to accomplish these objectives, the personal in-depth interviews and focus group discussion in the direction of the cross-sectional approach were the main method of primary data collection from the targeted key informants. Documentary data were also used to support analysis. Purposive selection was used to target the group of key informants needed for in-depth interviews and discussion. The key informants were selected from public and private tourism-related institutions in Hanoi, Vietnam. Judgment for inclusion was guided by the criteria in the context of selection of information sources. The group of key informants were representatives from Vietnam Tourism Promotion Board, and General Division of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, Travel Business Management Department of Hanoi Administration of Tourism, International Cooperation Department of Institute for Tourism

Development Research, Vietnamtourism in Ho Chi Minh City and OSC Travel (S.M.I. Group) Co.,Ltd in Vietnam. The semi- structured interviews were constructed as the qualitative research tool.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVELOPMENT AND POSITIONING ON DESTINATION IMAGE

Tourism is an industry of pleasure periphery. In relation to the conception of travel, tourism products comprise a bundle of elements selected to satisfy tourists' needs including transportation, accommodation, attractions and other facilities. Tourists do not buy products but they do buy the expectation of benefits at destinations. Consequently, the relations between destinations and visitors from their country of origin will be primarily influenced through the process of tourism development and destination marketing. Destination marketing is an essential part of developing and retaining a particular location's popularity. As such, a destination should develop products with tangible and intangible aspects to meet the market demands (Weaver & Lawton, 2002).

The destination as a product brings together all aspects of tourism such as demand, accessibility, supply and marketing. Then, the destination can be defined as the focus of facilities and services designed to meet the needs of the tourist (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998). Some fundamentals within the destination largely include travelers' choice and influence their buying motivation. Heath & Wall (1992) stated that most destinations offer an assortment of extensive tourism products, comprising product lines and product items that are made available to tourists in the destination. The governments and private sectors need to think about the core products that identify what tourists are really buying in a destination. Then, a destination may possibly seek to add a star product or product leader to its product lines and highlight it in promotional literature to differentiate it from the competition. Respectively, destination image could be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, impression and feelings

components that people hold of objects, products, services, attractions, events and people of a destination (Crompton, 1979 as cited in Gartner, 1996).

A destination's position is the way the destination or country is defined by tourists on essential attributes of the place the destination occupies in the tourists' mind relative to competing destinations. The planners plan positions that will give their destinations the greatest advantage in selected target markets and then design a marketing mix to create the planned position. Destinations can be positioned on the needs they fill or the benefits they offer and against the existing competitors or another product class (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2003). In general, the main mechanism marketers and planners use to establish a position for a product or destination is the creation of an image for it (Burke & Resnick, 2000).

Gartner (1996) explained that it is necessary to consider some principles of destination image characteristics in order to develop images. The effect of image management techniques depends on an understanding of potential visitor's interests and attitudes towards the destination. Images can establish a meaningful position in the public's mind as being a place, which is different from other destinations offering similar primary attractions (Laws, 1991). Destination image could be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, impression and feelings components that people hold of products, services, attractions, events and people of a destination (Crompton, 1979 as cited in Gartner, 1996) which are often a mixture of pull factors such as accessibility, attractions, cultural links, affordability, peace and stability (Weaver & Lawton, 2002).

The image that a destination creates in a prospective visitor's mind is often important than the product reality. To achieve the image development positioning that a destination creates is to design the accurate and distinct message to maximize the appeal of destination's image and maintain a positive relationship with the region and its offering better than competitors.

POTENTIAL OF VIETNAM TOURISM IN THE ASEAN REGION

With an economic renovation toward the open door policy since the mid-1980s, Vietnam with its natural resources has excellent opportunities for achieving the development of its tourism industry. Though this country introduced the constructive will to welcome the foreign direct investment and the foreign currency exchange, the state still plays a leading role to establish and monitor the strategic activities in development of all industry sectors. During the past years, the country has rapidly shifted from the post-war economic downturn to the lubricant portrait of tourism growth. The tourism industry of Vietnam is hence becoming a leading economic sector.

Along with the renovation of the country, Vietnam tourism has progressively developed. The number of international visitors to Vietnam had increased from 250,000 in 1990 to 2,140,000 in 2000. Since the year 2001, Vietnam's tourism has continuously proved to be an important segment of the economy. During 2001-2005, the international tourism arrival number to Vietnam has been increasing with average growth rate of 10.9%. Major tourism development statistics are shown in Table 1. There is a decline in the growth rate in 2002 with a gradual increase through 2003-2005 (See Table 2). The year 2004 was blessed as a successful year for Vietnam tourism (www.business-in-asis.com, 2006).

Table 1: Tourism Statistic Figures during 2001-2005

Figures	Unit	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average Growth rate (% p.a)
Int. arrival	'000	2,330.0	2,628.0	2,428.7	2,928.0	3,460.0	9.1
Dom. arrival	'000	11,700	13,000	13,500	14,500	16,100	8.1
Tourism income	USD Bill	1.63	1.97	1.90	2.17	2.52	11.9
Hotel rooms	'000	74.5	78.8	82.0	85.4	112.0	11.2

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2006

However, the number of international arrivals to Vietnam is still low compared to some ASEAN countries. In 2005, the total arrivals to Vietnam are equivalent to 27.2% of Thailand, 20.9% of Malaysia and 37.6% of Singapore. During the first 4 months of 2006, the number of international arrivals was 1,287,000, increasing 15.9% over the same period in 2005 (Pham Trung Luong, 2006). Appreciably, tourism growth rate in 2005 observed a good success and thrust for Vietnam tourism for the coming period of 2006-2010. By 2010, Vietnam aims to target 6 million international arrivals staying 8 days in its boundary and 25 million domestic tourists that would generate \$ 4.5 billion, 6.5% GDP and 1.4 million additional jobs (www.asiapacificprojects.com, 2005).

The tourist arrivals in 2004 were 27% from China, 26% from North Asian countries, 11% from ASEAN countries, 12% from Europe and 11% from North America. China comprises the largest market share and is projected to increase its market share significantly. During 2001-2005, there is a difference between growth rates of each market. Among Asian countries, Japan and Korea have recorded the biggest growth while leaders of European countries are Holland and Germany. The pattern of trip purposes to Vietnam during 2001-2005 has not greatly changed. The number of tourists

who visit Vietnam for VFR purpose remains constant while the growth of the business trips decreased in the year 2005.

Table 2: Vietnam – Growth Rate 2000-2005

Year (%)	Arrivals	AAGR
2000	2,140,100	20.11
2002	2,627,988	5.45
2003	2,428,735	6.35
2004	2,927,339	7.74
2005	3,460,000	9.10

Note: AAGR is Average Annual Growth Rate. Tourist arrivals are measured by nationality not residence.

Source: Turner & Witt, 2002a, 2003, PATA Annual Statistical Report 2003

WTO Market Trends, 2002

In the year 2006, the country is expected to host many important tourism events such as the Central Heritage Road, Hung King Worshipping Festival and the APEC Summit. These events along with interesting festivals and fairs will bring more inbound tourists to the country. Hence, Vietnam expects to welcome 3.6-3.8 million international tourists and 16.7 million domestic tourists with total revenue of VND 36 trillion (USD 2.28 billion) (www.vibforum.vcci.com.vn).

Noticeably, the future of Vietnam tourism is lucrative with the ever-increasing demand. The Vietnamese people are warm and hospitable. In view of the fact that Vietnam has a stable policy and high security, this significantly provides the impressive image to Vietnam as the safe destination for visiting. The Vietnam government has furthermore paid much attention in leading the tourism development of the country and

launching a succession of promotions in various key markets that help intensify the perceptive understanding of Vietnam throughout the world.

VIETNAM AND ITS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Vietnam is quite fast moving in tourism development comparing to other ASEAN member countries. The government introduces the country image as a friendly and safe destination to bring tourism into play. Vietnam employs the 2001-2010 Socio-Economic Development Strategy together with the framework of the National Tourism Action Program for the period of 2002-2005 as a strategic guidance for the country's development and to help encourage the economic growth. Vietnam's 10 Year Socio-Economic Development Strategy expresses a well-built obligation to rapid growth, job creation, poverty reduction and social equity. The strategy articulates the long-range development vision for the next ten year to basically develop the country from an agriculture-based economy to a modern-oriented industrialized economy by 2020 (www.grips.ac.jp, 2003 as cited in Tirasatayapitak, 2005). Tourism is embraced as an instrument to achieve such vision of the country. It is noteworthy that the major consideration in preparing the strategies on tourism development is the need to rapidly bring the country from the condition of underdevelopment and to raise the country's image. To achieve the objectives of the development, the tourism strategies focus mainly on the adoption of a five-point strategy including promoting tourism toward a balanced circulation between international and domestic tourism, adopting a niche and mass-market approach based on variety of tourism products and quality improvement, promoting investment schemes, adopting a tourism zone development approach and building up tourism alliances with neighboring countries. Sustainable development is employed as a primary path for tourism development in Vietnam. The strategy also states that 'historical-cultural tourism' and 'eco-tourism' should be focused on, a positive

image of Vietnam must be created and that the nation should become a Southeast Asian regional tourism center.

Development orientation for tourism zone

Tourism development strategy for Vietnam is based on the approach of establishing tourism zones (VNAT, 2001). The major types of attractions are defined for each zone. Each focuses on characteristics of tourist activities and major development orientations linked to tourist growth dynamic and economic key areas that offer substantial market potential for tourism development (Jansen-Verbeke, 1995). Phrasing of development to achieve the tourism strategic objectives is projected on the two periods of 2001-2005 and 2006-2010, within a longer period extending to 2020 (VNAT, 2001) as provided below:

- During the 2001-2005 period, tourism will be concentrated on using the best of existing attractions while upgrading their quality. The emphasis is placed on general nature and cultural tourism and further expansion of beach, marine and mountain resort tourism. The tourism product, marketing, human resource development and public and business management systems will be improved. Measures will be put in place to achieve the sustainability of tourism, including improved management of protected areas and living cultures and provision of the basis for development of eco-tourism and ethnic village tourism. However, protected areas now being properly managed can continue their development of eco-tourism and ethnic village tourism.

- During the 2006-2010 period, a broader range and geographical distribution of tourism products will be offered, notably expansion of mountain eco-tourism and associated ethnic group cultural tourism based on sustainable management. Adventure tourism will also be developed where it is based on sustainable use of resources.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM

The ASEAN region is physically prosperous in cultural, historical and natural features. Vietnam exploits the settlement of tourism resources in its country for development of various tourism products and activities. The situation facing the tourism development and the image positioning in Vietnam can be evaluated by a detailed consideration of strengths and weaknesses of its resources, current operations and management and from the environmental influences for threats and opportunities. Assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is a universally employed practice to analyze development potential and current management of an area. The conclusion of a SWOT analysis, which reviews the tourism development and potential positioning of tourism image in Vietnam, is as follows set forth.

Vietnam embraces the potential internal strengths that extensively support the tourism development to compete with other major tourist destinations of the ASEAN region. Vietnam possesses the unique physical and social characteristics as well as culture that greatly provide the variable diversity of tourism resources. The tourism potential of Vietnam is very wealthy in nature and humanity. From a cultural perspective, Vietnam offers rich historical sites, architectural monuments, French colonial architecture, Indo-Chinese cultural heritage and war memorial. These resources are spread in all regions of the country. According to the Revised Master Plan of Vietnam Tourism Development 2003-2010, Vietnam has a bundle of attractions to offer ranging from historical attractions, cultural sites and natural attractions spanning across the country including 3 tourism zones, 7 tourism development priority areas and 12 tourism urban areas such as Ha Long, Sapa, Do Son, Sam Son, Cua Lo, Hue, Hoi An, Nha Trang, Da Lat, Vung Tau, Phan Thiet and Ha Tien. Vietnam offers more than 80 major tourism destinations with 4 of which are complex tourism resorts and 31 special tourism resorts. Some attractions are well known at the worldwide scale as World Heritage Sites. Recently, Vietnam possesses 7 World Heritage Sites including 2 natural heritage sites

mountainous area in the central part of Vietnam. There is a noteworthy possibility for high growth rate of tourism development and expansion in these areas. Based on the underlined wealthy tourism resources in nature, culture and history, the combination of natural and cultural tourism resources forms a strong basis to develop unique tourism products and has the potential to make Vietnam an attractive destination in ASEAN for beach holidays and visiting natural, historical and cultural attractions.

Vietnam is geographically located adjacent to the growing tourism markets such as Asia-Pacific and the regional markets of the Greater Mekong Sub-region where the expansion of economic terms is very remarkable and people in the region have more purchasing power. The government has good conditions for developing the transportation networks by airways, road, rail and sea linking with other countries in the region and the world. Given its well-physical location, Vietnam serves as a supplementary gateway to disperse tourists to countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Vietnam could take advantage of this condition by offering competitive product prices and cater to the tourists all year round.

The current operation of tourism development in Vietnam is productive because the Vietnam government determined tourism as the spearhead economic sector in national industrialization. The renovation and open door policy have stimulated the economic growth, favorable conditions for foreign economic relations and great potentials in development of the whole country. Regarding a stable and supportive government, Vietnam has set up the foundation to create a new foreign trade system such as the banking system and liberalizing foreign exchange that would augment the number of trading companies and fast economic growth. Vietnam has revised the Foreign Investment Law, which provides high opportunities for joint ventures between the foreigners and local partners in the tourism industry. Many legal documents relating to tourism have been issued and supplemented as Business Law, Law on Foreign Investment in Vietnam that creates the healthier environment and a legal corridor for tourism development. As a consequence of the trade and industry reform, the economy,

quality of living standards and social infrastructure of Vietnam altogether with the accommodation facilities and leisure complexes in the major tourist areas have been gradually upgraded. These advantages reinforce the complimentary conditions of the exploitation of tourism potentials, development of tourism attractions and touring circuits and promote higher demand in domestic tourism.

If comparing with other ASEAN member countries, Vietnam has a stable policy and high security. The Vietnamese people are warm and hospitable. They warmly welcome the visitors who visit their country with their traditional culture and friendship. This significantly provides an impressive image of Vietnam as a safe tourism destination. Besides emphasizing upon the development projected to encourage the economic growth, Vietnam has paid attention to preserving the natural and cultural resources of the country towards the close cooperation with Ministries and local governments to establish the master plans for tourism development. The development of human resources for the tourism industry in terms of training content and systems specialized in tourism from vocational to a high level of education has been gradually and seriously encouraged. As a consequence, the Vietnam labor force has a high level of literacy. The labor force in Vietnam is a great resource to tourism industry development.

To mutually reinforce the tourism development in the GMS region, Vietnam has collaborated in the Mekong/ Lancang River tourism infrastructure development project. This helps Vietnam to strengthen the cooperation and tourism development with other GMS countries and will create a unique opportunity for the country to be promoted as a part of the Mekong/ Lancang River destination. Vietnam has applied bilateral visas exemption to facilitate the travel for citizens from seven ASEAN countries, namely Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Singapore. This contributes positively to rapid growth rate of international arrivals to the country.

Even if Vietnam possesses the potential internal strengths for tourism development in various aspects, the critical issues in operation and management have played vital roles as obstacles to tourism growth and achievement of missions.

Practically the same as often occurring in the developing countries, tourism resources and environment are degraded due to the improper exploitation and increasing impacts by natural disasters which have been occurring in many areas of the country. Exploitation of tourism resources depends mainly on the natural resource, which are pristine. There is insufficient strict control and implementation of tourism master plan and specific environmental regulations for tourism destination on exploiting coastal and sea resources in some important areas such as Halong and Danang. This causes many serious damages to the environment of the coastal areas caused by other economic activities, insufficient protection of the public interest and the environment. Critically, Vietnam is facing the barrier of limited effectiveness of business operation management and professional skills in terms of the use of tourism resources and cooperation in developing tourism products. Not many tourism development projects in key attractions have been carried out an environmental impact assessment. The current large scale of marine tourism environment is very easy to be destroyed by modern geographic process and the impact of human activities. The high density of tourists, concentrated in only few resorts has created an unacceptable stress, which can destroy the natural value and ecosystem of the area (www.vub.ac.be). The inadequate conservation and development of resources and environmental protection will seriously affect the achievement of sustainable development. It is very risk that Vietnam would face the same environmental problems as occurred in Thailand if the government does not protect the natural resources now. The environmental problem may harm the tourism industry in the long term.

Tourism in Vietnam has rapidly developed since the year 2005. It will be quite difficult to control the rapid expansion of the national tourism industry as there is insufficient appropriate tourism management expertise in Vietnam. Thus, the management from the central and local government cannot accomplish the high degree of development. The replacement of international atmosphere could be widely seen in most major tourist destinations of Vietnam. The development of accommodation facilities

is very fast. The number of hotel capacities is over-exceeding than the tourists' demand in some destinations such as in Halong and Danang City due to several factors including improvement of transportation system and changes of tourists' need. The local authority does not keep control on the numbers of hotel expansion. They do not conduct the marketing survey, research and feasibility of demand structure. Obviously, huge demand of hotel development has been introduced in Hanoi but there are still inadequate high quality hotels in this city as well as throughout the country. Hence, there is a need to balance the demand of all ranking.

It is worthy to note that while the current practice of Vietnam's tourism is positive, the burdensome levels of bureaucracy and various unnecessary regulations interrupt the market activities. Inaccessibility to Vietnam could be affected from the difficulty of frontier formalities and the rigid customs. Corruption and bureaucracy in certain segments of public and private sectors remain uncontrolled although the government pushes efforts to eliminate this problem. The tourism related agents are obstructed with national politics and bureaucracy. Vietnam still individually strictly controls the trade and economic development within the country by establishing rules and regulations and administrative system. Though Vietnam implements the process of enacting the necessary laws and decrees in the legal system such as contracting, banking system, property rights and foreign investment laws, the existing difficulty is mainly caused by uncertainty and inconsistency in interpreting the laws. Interestingly, there are no investment codes specific for tourism. The investor encounters the financial risk of high upfront cost with longer payback period, especially for the hotel projects. Different authorities put policies into practice according to their own interpretations, which make foreign investors confused. Besides the private and joint venture businesses, some firms in Vietnam are currently the state-owned company. Most state-owned properties exist as independent units. This often causes many problems in business operations such as the funding, the separation of the firm management and ownership that would lead to poor supervising of the State resources. However, there is a tendency to change the business

system. After being the member of World Trade Organization by the end of 2006, most state-owned companies will develop into the private firms.

Concerning the infrastructure and basic facilities in Vietnam, Vietnam does not have adequate financial resources to develop basic infrastructure which can meet the requirement of economic development and tourism development such as the accessibility, communication system and development of tourism circuits and attractions in the mountainous, island and remote areas. The transportation connections are not very convenient and low in frequency. Tourism infrastructure, especially airports and seaports, which can be international gateways and serve the tourist flows from countries in the region have yet to meet the development requirement. Additionally, socio-economic development levels and residents' living standard in Vietnam are still low which affect the supply and demand relationship for tourism development.

Service in Vietnam is still poor. The pricing system is still critical and lacks of standards. There are insufficient conditions for small and medium enterprises in order to activate all resources for tourism development and disperse mutual benefits to the communities. Evidently, Vietnam is facing the shortage of highly trained and qualified persons who can carry out well the cooperative marketing. The tourism attractions has not been competently presented and integrated into the tourism markets. The number of competitive tourism products is still limited. Marketing and promotion and branding have yet to meet the demand of the present prospective markets. Provision of education for community about protection of the tourism environment is required to urgently improve. There is a lack of professional labor force in serving the tourism industry. The turnover rate of employees in the industry is high. Social awareness on tourism is still insufficient. The low participation from local communities and local officials, especially in the decision-making on tourism planning, activities and controlling the areas is very critical. There is a lack of tourism training and education plans for local people. It will degrade the overall quality of service standards and competencies to carry on Vietnam's competitiveness among destinations in the region.

In the context of tourism development, the potential external opportunities considerably influence and hearten the growth rate of development in Vietnam. Globalization, peace, cooperation and development in technology rapidly develop world tourism, which illustrates the tourist demand toward South East Asia and Pacific. In addition, the peaceful atmosphere in the region enhances the potential opportunity for investment in tourism. The growth rate of tourism development in the region is high. The development of basic infrastructure and facilities throughout the region contributes the dispersion of tourism growth. Most of big airlines provide direct flights to the main cities of Vietnam such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang, Hai Phong (from Macau) and Dalat (from Singapore) that greatly facilitates the infrastructural accessibility from the major market regions. This is the good opportunity for Vietnam tourism to be developed.

The overall commitment to a sub-regional tourism development agenda among six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region remains strong. The effective collaboration on tourism development among countries in the region will be the significant opportunity for mutual tourism development to create the multi-tourism circuits and expand the product lines. There is a high possibility to exchange tourist flows with other member countries and integrate in the regional development policy as a partner of single tourist destination. Promoting the Greater Mekong Sub-region as single destination based on a bundle of cultural and natural products will hearten a sense of mission among stakeholders in all countries concerned to partake in sub-regional tourism promotion and development activities. The strategy to develop and promote the priority tourism zones and touring circuits along the Mekong River that contains most of the sub-region's major tourism resources has the potential to make a substantial contribution to mutual sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

Lastly, the assistance of World Tourism Organization, ASIANTA, PATA and the technical assistance projects by EU help provide the training for human resource development. The international acceptance for Vietnam to be the member of World Trade Organization (WTO) by the end of 2006 will significantly enhance the positive

image of Vietnam and provide more opportunities and the assistance in cooperative development in tourism.

In opposition, Vietnam is encountering the environmental influences of threats that delay the tourism expansion in the country. For example, the competition between the destinations all over the world is increasingly serious since these countries aim at tourism as a means to boost the economic mechanism and retain the existing shares in the markets. Then, the search for new potential buyers is becoming intense. The development of basic infrastructure such as road connections in the region takes too long time and the energy shortage may cause the high cost in investment and tourism business operation. It is impossible to deny that the difficulty in empowering the investment from the regional economic system in the development affects from the disparity of development of monetary and banking system in each country.

In relation to marketing schemes, the market segmentation, positioning and branding practices of the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region are not clearly defined. The marketing capabilities of most GMS national tourism organizations are limited in terms of the weak destination marketing management, capacities and lack of adequate funding. The conflict of interests in sharing tourism resources pool among member countries in the region still remains and this may be a result of incorrect assumption that the tourist going to another country are actually tourists who would come to their own country.

The crucial difference in standard quality of products, services and prices greatly affects the tourists' satisfaction. The balance between economic development and environmental degradation is going to be crucial. The inability to implement sustainable development principles and practices at the natural and cultural resource management level and at the community level may cause the potentially adverse environmental impacts. Furthermore, the effective pro-poor tourism development principles and practices as well as the assurance that all stakeholders in the regional tourism system are engaged in the process to maximize the commitment are still not

applied. The tourism industry's contribution to poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development is restricted and the reimbursement is disproportionately distributed all through the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

PROMOTING VIETNAM TOURISM THROUGH IMAGE POSITIONING

The variety of physical natural and cultural contexts in Vietnam appreciably plays an essential role to attract tourists worldwide to explore and experience the national heritages. If analyzing product characteristics of Vietnam, the key product lines or offerings currently presented to the market could be generally identified as consisting of cultural and scenic offerings. Tourists could visit Vietnam the whole year round. Vietnam has a remarkably diverse climate by the influence of the North and South monsoon. The tourist season is from October to December and May to June in the north, from May to August and January to April in the central Vietnam and May to December in the south.

Regarding to the focus group discussion, there are different points of view on the existing image positioning of Vietnam tourism. Some respondents considered that the existing image positioning is different from the ASEAN neighboring countries while some viewed that the tourism image positioning is similar to other regional countries. In the analysis of the perception of tourism destination marketing, the elements or aspects could be used as a symbol to promote tourism in Vietnam was discussed. The beauty of nature is proposed to play as a symbol for promoting Vietnam tourism at the highest level. Comparing the perceived level of prospective elements being used as an icon for marketing the destination, the cultural and heritage prosperity could also be employed to promote tourism at a high level. In another vein, the long trace of history and ways of life are also interesting as another alternative element for national marketing.

Along with the icon to support tourism image position, the natural and cultural tourism is strongly agreed as activity to extensively influence visitors to visit this country. Then, this type of tourism is respectively approved to be the most appropriate influential promotional theme of tourism core products in Vietnam. Additionally, the historic-cultural tourism could also be used as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to Vietnam. The health tourism and shopping tourism gains the low interests from the public and private sectors to be used as the marketing tool. It is obviously seen that this result is somewhat relevant with the study accomplished by Dr. Tirasatayapitak (2005). She measured the data using a 5-point ranking scale. She ranked the beauty of natural attractions as the most noteworthy factor (mean= 4.26) that appeal to visitors at the highest level, followed by art, architecture and culture (mean= 3.87) that also highly influence tourist's desire to travel to Vietnam. Tourists can pleasantly appreciate the beautiful green nature in most areas of Vietnam. When comparing the results of the study with the content analysis of tourism development plans and policies, it is interesting to find out that the image of tourism in Vietnam still captures on the outline of nature beauty and cultural identity.

In recent times, Vietnam has offered an array of choices of attractions that provide opportunity for the natural and cultural tourism and the historic-cultural tourism. With respect to such major promotional themes of natural and cultural tourism, the fashionable presented attractions comprise Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island, Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An, Danang - Myson, Ho Chi Minh City, the Mekong Delta, Sapa, Phan Thiet and Nha Trang. The new attractions, which have potential in being developed for tourism to serve up such theme, are Phu Quoc Island, Den Hung and Thien Cam. The Tay Nguyen Central Highland is the tourist destination that well serves the minor promotional theme of historic-cultural tourism. The innovative attractions with possibility to serve up such minor promotional theme include Dien Bien Phu and Quang Tri.

CONCLUSION

Image positioning can be a constructive tool to highlight the attractiveness of Vietnam tourism products. This study has confirmed that the image positioning of Vietnam tourism is not greatly different from the neighboring ASEAN countries. The findings of the study can be used to reflect the precise image positioning of Vietnam tourism in order to establish more efficient direction of tourism product development. In travel marketing, the success of a product's position is ultimately measured by how well marketing objectives are accomplished (Burke & Resnick, 2000). With the purpose of capturing the new tourism target markets and maintaining the quality improvement in international tourism, Vietnam should make a distinction itself from the competitors toward the destination positioning strategy that underpins the apparent position with an identifiable product and attractions based on unique beauty of nature as a symbol for promoting Vietnam tourism. In addition, the cultural and heritage prosperity could also be employed to promote tourism as alternative element for national destination marketing. Consequently, it is essential for Vietnam to design the distinct message to maximize the appeal of country's image through the natural and cultural tourism as the most appropriate influential promotional theme of tourism products in accompanying with the historic-cultural tourism as a minor promotional theme to influence tourists' desire to travel to Vietnam. Given that Vietnam possesses the wealthy tourism potential in nature, culture and humanity, Vietnam may pinpoint to position the tourism image by product benefits to create a distinct and positive perception in visitors' minds of the benefits of Vietnam destination as the antidote for heaven of nature and civilization.....

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