

Training Programme on Marketing and Promotion of Multi-Destination Tourism

Mission Report and Recommendations for Future Actions



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Mission Report and Recommendations for Future Actions is prepared as part of Training Programme on Marketing and Promotion of Multi-Destination Tourism by Ms. Anne Maria Mäkelä.

1. Background

1.1. About this Training

Tourism – and especially cross-border tourism – plays an important role in fostering sustainable regional economic development in Northeast Asia. Hence, tangible cooperation and integration in the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) are the cornerstones of tapping the region's abundant resources. The GTI Strategic Action Plan 2017–2020 as well as the 2018 GTI Consultative Commission's Ulaanbaatar Declaration both acknowledge this fact and identify priority areas, goals and approaches regarding tourism development in the Greater Tumen Region (GTR).

The main objective of the training was to raise awareness and develop skills of tourism stakeholders from the GTR to better understand concepts and latest techniques in tourism marketing and promotion, particularly in relation to multi-destination tourism (MDT). It improved the skills in the fields of strategic marketing planning, operational marketing, e-marketing, and evaluation of promotional activities. The GTI Secretariat together with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) jointly organized the training with financial support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH Programme on Support for Economic Cooperation in Sub-regional Initiatives in Asia (SCSI). The Jilin Provincial Tourism Administration, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture Government and Hunchun Municipal Government hosted the training in Hunchun.

The training provided a first approach to jointly develop capacity among GTI members from the GTR region on cross-border tourism development. The event assembled tour operators and delegates who represented the various tourism strategies which had recently been put forward by national and local governments. Based on inputs and group work during the training, next steps could be discussed for concrete cooperation under the GTI Tourism Board.

The following pages outline the main topics of the training which was presented by experts from UNWTO. This document shall serve to inform and further deepen the discussion as well as create joint project proposals in the field of tourism between the four GTI member countries.

The key challenges and opportunities for the GTI tourism are explored in chapter 3 (p. 12); chapters 4 and 5 (p. 14/16) detail recommendations for follow-up activities and future cooperation based on some of the discussions and conclusions from the event.

1.2. Tourism Trends in Northeast Asia

Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world and estimated to represent around 7 per cent of global exports and 30 per cent of the world's exports of services. This ranks the sector the third most important in the world after chemicals and fuels.

In 2017, international tourism grew by 6.8% to reach 1323 million international tourist arrivals worldwide who generated USD 1332 billion in receipts. Asia and the Pacific welcomed 323 million international tourists in 2017 – close to a quarter of the world's total and 17 million more than in 2016. This is equivalent to a 5.6% growth in arrivals. Northeast Asia – encompassing the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) member countries China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation - received the most tourists within Asia with 159 million international tourists, which represented a 3.4% growth over 2016. Growth was fuelled by solid intraregional demand, particularly from China and the Republic of Korea.

Tourism to Asia and the Pacific and, in particular, Northeast Asia will become the fastest growing tourism region of the world. Due to the continued growth of demand in emerging economies, especially in Asia, with a growing middle class, the growth of tourism within the region is expected to continue. The region has an appeal for tourists that are looking for new destinations since Northeast Asia is located within close proximity to some of the world's most popular destinations and emerging as well as developed outbound markets.

1.3. Globalization linked with the Emergence of Transnational Tourism Routes

At 7th GTI NEA Tourism Forum in Hunchun - China, UNWTO presented the main thesis:

“The emergence of transnational tourism routes, which entails cooperation across borders among many stakeholders with different goals and objectives, is a direct results of changes brought forward by globalization. We are experiencing profound changes in the political, socio-economic and cultural spheres, and these changes determine the way we think about and experience travel.”

This is supported by the 'More, Mobility and Mentality' Revolutions – a concept developed by Moises Naim:

More	Population growth; increased economic output; increased income per capita; eradication of extreme poverty; increase in international tourist arrivals.
Mobility	Speed at which people, goods, services, money, and ideas move around all corners of the world thanks to improved technology,

	infrastructure, air transportation.
Mentality	Whereas the more revolution entails the opening-up of opportunities, and the mobility revolution their potential realization, the mentality revolution implies a fundamental change of cognizance resulting from these changes. "Aspiration" and, applied to tourism, "experiential travel" are new keywords that help understand changes in personal and group behaviour / attitude.

2.Examples of Transnational Destinations and Best Practices

2.1. Transnational Destinations Reacting to the Global Shifts

Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative aims at enhancing cooperation and expanding the scale of tourism by creating competitive tourist routes and products with Silk Road features, facilitating travel, and further developing cruise tourism under the umbrella of the 21st century maritime Silk Road.



The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)

GMS - comprising Cambodia, Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam – is united by the iconic Mekong River. GMS countries have agreed that regional tourism cooperation is a priority. The countries are committed to developing competitive, inclusive, and sustainable tourism that improves socioeconomic well-being. The GMS Economic Cooperation Program is based on the '3 Cs', whereby the countries focus on improving physical and nonphysical Connectivity, improve the subregion's Competitiveness and strengthen human resources to address shared social and environmental concerns and enable a strong sense of Community.

The GMS stakeholders follow the guiding principles in tourism cooperation:

- i) Generation benefits for more than one GMS country;
- ii) Protect cultural, natural, urban, and other tourism assets; emphasize secondary destination development and destination development along the Mekong River;
- iii) Promote continuous service quality improvements;
- iv) Enable meaningful and beneficial experiences for visitors and host;
- v) Ensure safe and accessible destination development;
- vi) Strengthen the business-enabling environment for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- vii) Disseminate consistent messages and a visual identity that communicate the Mekong brand characteristics of nature, culture and community; and
- viii) Encourage cooperation and collaboration among all stakeholders.

The following table provides the GMS Tourism Cooperation Strategic Framework, which guides the joint actions:



Source: Greater Mekong Sub-region Tourism Sector Strategy 2016-2025

Under Program 3.2, the GMS countries have also prioritized their multi-country thematic tour programmes as stated in the following table:

ROUTE	COUNTRIES	MAIN EXPERIENCES
Southern Coastal Corridor	Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam	Beach and islands, leisure, seafood, history, culture, community-based tourism
Largest Waterfall in Asia	Guangxi Zhuang, People's Republic of China (PRC); and Viet Nam	Nature, ethnic groups, culture
Mekong Tea Caravan Trail	Yunnan, PRC; Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR); and Thailand	River cruising, food, nature, ethnic groups, culture, ecotourism in the Golden Quadrangle
Northern Heritage Trail	Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam	Culture, nature, history, community-based tourism
Mekong Tea Caravan Trail	Yunnan, PRC; Lao PDR; Myanmar; and Thailand	Ethnic groups, culture, ecotourism
Mekong Discovery Trail	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam	Mekong excursions, nature, history, culture, coffee, ecotourism
Cruising the Mekong Delta	Cambodia and Viet Nam	Mekong excursions, nature, culture, food
The Middle Path	Myanmar and Thailand	Culture, history, pilgrimage
Golden Triangle Mekong River Cruising	Lao PDR and Thailand	Mekong excursions, nature, culture, soft adventure
Route 8	Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam	Nature, soft adventure, culture, history, pilgrimage, beach
East-West Corridor	Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam	Beach, culture, history

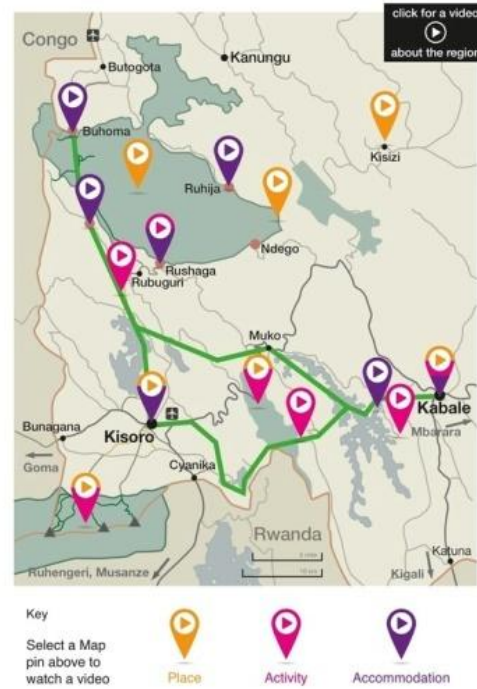
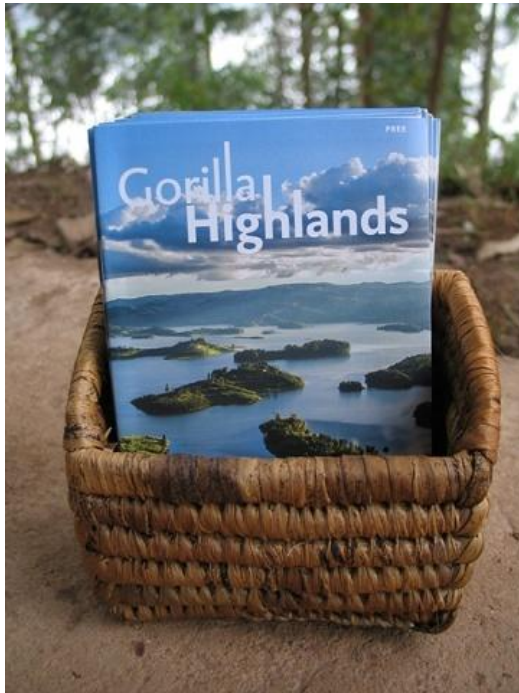
Source: Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Marketing Strategy and Action Plan 2015–2020.

The Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO) operates on annual financial contributions from each GMS country and has two primary functions:

- i) Sustainable tourism development; and
- ii) Marketing. MTCO promotes the Mekong region as a single travel and tourism destination.

Gorilla Highlands

Gorilla Highlands transnational destination – Uganda and Rwanda – represents a regional tourism network model where inter-related tourism products and services cluster around a particular set of complementary tourists attractions in a defined region. The Gorilla Highlands region has a distinctive and differentiated profile thanks to the endangered mountain gorillas found only in the border regions of Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The gorillas draw both domestic and international visitors to the region and provide a direct contribution to the regional economy. Around this core mountain gorilla experience, other experiences have been developed to extend the length of stay and increase the spending in the region. These other experiences, such as hikes, visits to traditional healers, traditional canoeing on the Lake Bunyoni etc., have broadened and diversified the tourism product mix and the general offering, appealing to a wider market, rather than focusing attention on one particular tourism attraction.

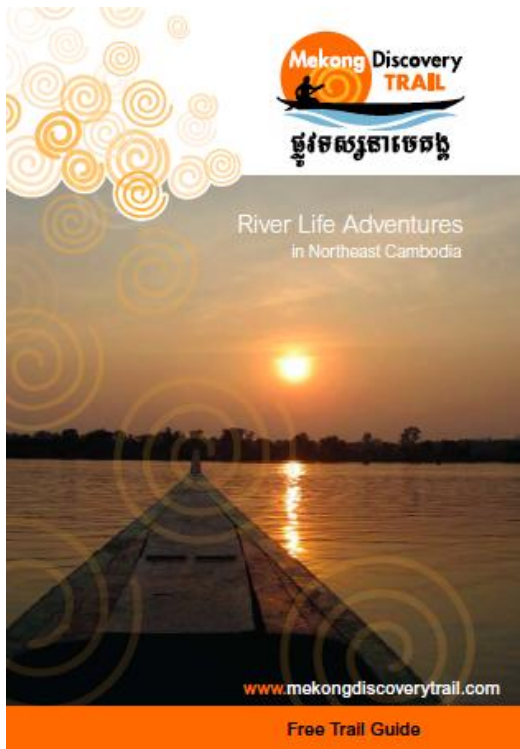


In practical terms, the Gorilla Highlands undertakes a range of promotional activities, including:

- Branding of the region (as 'Gorilla Highlands');
- Video map;
- International promotion of the region through social networks and participation in trade fairs;
- Production of an interactive e-book of 400 pages, covering every aspect of the region;
- Pocketbook guide (10,000 printed and distributed without charge, paid advertising listings at UGX 3,000 per word);
- Comprehensive, in-depth travel guide for specialists in Uganda and Rwanda;
- Weekly slots on local radio (Voice of Kigezi) to reach out, especially to local youth, about the benefits of tourism to their culture and history on their livelihoods;
- Development of a comprehensive website about the region (see www.gorillahighlands.com);
- Facilitate fam trips for tour operators based in the capital cities to experience the region for themselves and gain feedback and promote tourism products;
- Business linkage workshops; and
- Gorilla Highlands Trails, guided treks for up to 5 days, a sub-product of the Gorilla Highlands initiative. (Source: Innovative Business Practices for Tourism Growth, manual prepared within the framework of the UNWTO/UNDP/UTB project on support for development of inclusive markets in tourism).

Mekong Discovery Trail - Multi-provincial destination with opportunities to turn into multinational tourism destination

Similar objectives for cross provincial and, possibly in the future cross-border tourism, can be found in the Mekong Discovery Trail –initiative in Cambodia, where the main attraction is the Irrawaddy Dolphin and, around the trails, canoeing routes, visits to the islands have been developed to extend the length of stay and spending in the region. Developing the trails – giving tourists options for one or several extra days – and the informative and interpretative brochure ‘Mekong Discovery Trail – River Life Adventures in Northeast Asia’ extended the length of stay of visitors by 1-2 nights immediately after the launch of the brochure, which was targeted to the visitors already coming to the region and who had an opportunity to change their plans on the spot (backpackers and flash packers).



Welcome to a Mekong Town



Kratie Welcome Tour
 Distance: 7 km return
 Transport:
 Options:
 Itinerary: Hire bicycle or horse cart. Start early morning or mid-afternoon to catch Rattakandai Market. For a full day, combine with Koh Trong Island tour p22.
Highlights:
 • Horse cart ride and shady streets
 • Colourful local markets
 • French colonial architecture
 • A journey from Wat to Wat.
 See p18-19 for more detail. →



Horse carts are part of Kratie life. The drivers have formed an association to conduct tours (see contacts p24). You can also hire one on the town trail and Dolphin Discovery trail (p18-21).

- Around Town**
- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. customs office | 8. Robinson market |
| 2. tourist office | 9. local market |
| 3. post office | 10. bus departure |
| 4. bank and western shops | 11. local transport centre |
| 5. hospital | 12. Wat Somya (central Wat) |
| 6. river pier | 13. Wat Khamkham |
| 7. night market | 14. heritage street and craft store |
| 8. night market | 15. night market |

2.2. Best Practices Based on Transnational Tourism Case Examples

GTI and its transnational tourism collaboration can draw upon the following best practices piloted in the previously mentioned multi-national tourism destinations:

- **Set up common vision and guiding principles;**
- **Develop jointly-agreed vision and strategic directions** in developing human resources (human capital), infrastructure, tourism experiences (products), joint marketing and promotion, and facilitation of regional travel. The set objectives of each strategic direction should be evaluated in 6 to 12 month periods. The implementation therefore can be divided into various stages to monitor the progress;
- **Conduct joint research** in regular intervals in order to find:
 - i) common theme(s)/tourism products for new tourism experiences in the Greater Tumen Region;
 - ii) identify the current profile of visitors, their travel behaviour, and values the Tumen tourism experience matches to segment the markets, brand the experience, and target the offer to prospective customers;
 - iii) justify investments in the region; and
 - iv) monitor and evaluate the results of product development and marketing activities;
- **Manage the brand, its values and guidelines** and facilitate this by giving GTI office the mandate to coordinate the marketing and promotional activities of the Tumen transnational destination and manage and evaluate the results.

The following figure summarizes the common steps in developing transnational tourism routes:



Source: Ethna Murphy, Ethna Murphy Consulting Ireland (2017)

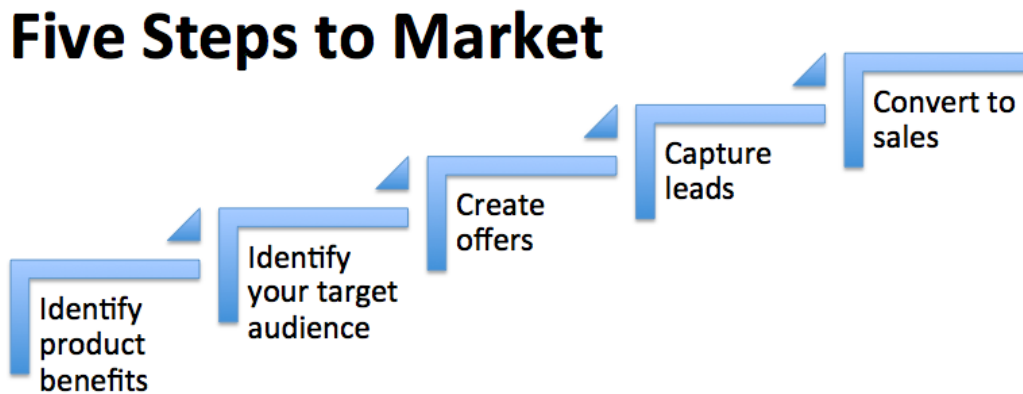
3.Key Challenges and Opportunities for GTI Tourism

	Challenges	Opportunities
Product	<p>No common theme for a transnational Tumen tourism product established.</p> <p>Regions still focus on their own product.</p> <p>Travel facilitation (visas and border crossing) within the Tumen region.</p> <p>Connectivity.</p> <p>Quality of the facilities and services vary across the region.</p> <p>Lack of clustering and linkages between businesses across the borders (tour operators, hotels, restaurants etc.)</p>	<p><i>Develop one to three transnational theme-based products</i> (e.g. History of Northeast Asia – educational tour targeted to the student groups focusing on the history, political and economic development. Chinese government supports inclusion of educational study trips into the curricula).</p> <p><i>Already-developed infrastructure provides immense opportunities for connecting experiences in the various cultural and natural spheres of Northeast Asia</i> (e.g. Experience the nomadic lifestyle, freedom and adventure of the steppes and taiga in Tumen).</p> <p><i>Consider e.g. joint standardization of accommodation establishments based on the Serbia example</i> (hiker friendly accommodation; family-friendly accommodation; student group friendly accommodation etc.) and the defined Tumen tourism product.</p>
Price	<p>Pricing strategies are weak due to the lack of transnational product.</p>	<p><i>Create pricing strategies based on product development, market segment and distribution options.</i></p>
Place	<p>Distribution channels not defined due to the lack of joint transnational product and updated marketing strategy.</p>	<p><i>Develop distribution strategies based on the product/theme, market segments and marketing strategy.</i></p>
Promotion	<p>Not known; challenged by the lack of joint product.</p> <p>Joint market segmentation weak, if not lacking – regions target their own specific markets.</p> <p>No joint marketing strategy including brand and guidelines not updated and agreed upon among</p>	<p><i>Develop (update) joint marketing strategy.</i></p> <p>GTI coordinated joint marketing and promotion including</p> <p>i) developing the brand and brand management guidelines; ii) social media marketing, iii) organization of fam trips for bloggers and specific media as well</p>

	the key stakeholders.	as tour operators in the region, iv) participation at selected travel trade fairs with the priority focus on the regional trade fairs.
People	Limited investment in human capital to service the tourism sector.	<i>Set up a network of research and educational institutions around Northeast Asia</i> for i) introducing Tumen transnational tourism destination in the tourism curricula; ii) developing a joint human resource development strategy and action plan; iii) providing capacity building for the key stakeholders in the region including public and private sector as well as the NGOs involved in tourism development; iv) conducting market research/visitor surveys in regular intervals.

4. Recommendations for Future Actions in Developing GTI Transnational Tourism

Based on the best practices, lessons learnt, the practical approach 'Five Steps to Markets' illustrated in the below figure, and the discussions at the group work sessions at the training provided in Hunchun within the framework of the 7th GTI Northeast Asia Tourism Forum,



The following actions should take place in order to proceed with the Tumen's transnational tourism development:

- i) *Set up common vision and guiding principles*, if not already agreed upon;
- ii) Based on the common vision and guiding principles, *develop jointly-agreed vision and strategic directions in developing transnational tourism experiences* (joint transnational product), human resources, and infrastructure, facilitation of regional travel, and joint marketing and promotion. Since the tourism coordination in the region has been ongoing for close to two decades, there is no need to conduct extensive studies but rather develop the directions and action plans for area. The set objectives of each strategic direction should be evaluated in 6 to 12 month periods;
- iii) *Develop one to three transnational theme-based products* (e.g. History of Northeast Asia – educational tour targeted to the student groups focusing on the history, political and economic development. Chinese government supports inclusion of educational study trips into the curricula);
- iv) *Develop (update) joint marketing strategy/Action Plan*. GTI coordinated joint marketing and promotion including i) developing the brand and brand management guidelines; ii) social media marketing, iii)

organization of fam trips for bloggers and specific media as well as tour operators in the region, iv) participation at selected travel trade fairs with the priority focus on the regional trade fairs. In this connection, organize technical trainings for both public and private sector representatives on all the topics;

- v) ***Set up a network of research and educational institutions around Northeast Asia*** for i) introducing Tumen transnational tourism destination in the tourism curricula; ii) developing a joint human resource development strategy and action plan; iii) providing capacity building for the key stakeholders in the region including public and private sector as well as the NGOs involved in tourism development; iv) conducting market research/visitor surveys in regular intervals to profile the visitors, their Tumen tourism experience related values and to evaluate the results of product development and marketing activities, to justify investment in the region, and to find common theme(s) for new tourism experiences in the Greater Tumen Region; and
- vi) ***Give the GTI Secretariat a mandate to coordinate transnational tourism development and joint marketing and promotional activities as well as to manage and evaluate the results.***

5. Recommendations for Further Trainings/Joint Workshops

i) Transnational tourism product development targeted to public and private sector representatives focusing on the following topics:

- Principles of Tourism Product Development Planning;
- Steps in the process – Step 1 Vision and Ambition; Step 2 Building the Cluster and Partnerships; Step 3 Experience Development Action; Plan; Step 4 Market and Communications;
- Destination Variations; and
- Sharing of best practices.

This training/workshop should focus on developing joint Tumen transnational tourism products based on thematic research and joint vision.

ii) Social media marketing training targeted mainly to the private sector representatives:

- Why is social media important in the tourism sector;
- Overview of social media platforms;
- Tourism social media landscape;
- Developing a social media strategy for tourism business;
- How to monitor and manage business reputation online;
- How to evaluate social media campaigns; and
- Examples of social media campaigns.

iii) Exhibition Planning, Management and Measuring Exhibition Success targeted to both public and private sector representatives:

Exhibition Planning:

- The basics of exhibition planning;
- Forecasting sales;
- Preparing the staff;
- Pre-exhibition preparation;
- How do we keep track? and
- Special considerations for an international exhibition.

Exhibition Management:

- Definitions;
- Organization;
- Exhibition management: site selection, program planning;
- Exhibition service contractor;
- Exhibition prospectus;
- Exhibit service manual;
- Exhibition planning: location, marketing & promotion, technology, housing, transportation;
- Risk and crisis management;
- Expenses;
- Exhibit layout; and
- Exhibitor success.

Measuring Exhibition Success:

- Why measure?
- No goals, no glory – quantifiable goals drive action;
- Measurement matrix – goals into practical metrics;
- Examples of measurement forms;
- Follow-up; and
- Homework: drafting quantifiable goals, measurement matrixes and measurement forms for the participants/their organizations.