

Hanoi, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Professionalising Tourism Marketing**

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012, more than 200 participants from the 63 provincial Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Tourism Promotion Centers and other national tourism authorities congregated for a National Tourism Marketing Conference in Hanoi, organized by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), with technical support from the European Union funded "Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme (ESRT)".

The conference was aimed at supporting VNAT to disseminate the proposed Vietnam Tourism Marketing Strategy to 2020 and Action Plan 2013 – 2015, and the Destination Branding Guidelines for Vietnam. The ESRT Programme was also instrumental in supporting VNAT to develop its new slogan and logo: "Vietnam – Timeless Charm", which has been approved by the Minister of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism for the National Tourism Promotion Programme 2012 – 2015.

Apart from introducing the Marketing Strategy for Vietnam to 2020, Action Plan 2013 – 2015, the conference provided tourism promotion practitioners throughout the country with a chance to meet and network, and exchange experiences. Furthermore, it contributed to the enhancement of quality and effectiveness of tourism promotion and marketing in Vietnam, and the successful achievement of the objectives in the Tourism Development Strategy to 2020, with the vision to 2030.

In his opening speech the EU-Ambassador, Mr. Franz Jessen pointed that there are some "key challenges which are putting at risk the potential of the sector; the international tourist numbers are going down, and the competition of neighbours is fierce", Mr. Jessen also stated that "the Government of Vietnam needs to act fast and work with the private sector to address these challenges".

#### **➔ VIETNAM TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY TO 2020, ACTION PLAN 2013 - 2015**

In the conference, Kai Partale, expert from the ESRT Programme presented the Tourism Marketing Strategy to 2020. The highly researched strategy based upon international best-practice aims to finally bring Vietnam up to par with its regional competitors who are aggressively investing in the marketing and promotion of tourism to their countries well-beyond levels seen in Vietnam.

The Marketing Strategy reinforces the Government's Tourism Development Strategy objectives for the tourism sector in Vietnam: i) Economic: attract 10-10.5 million international visitors by 2020, and serve 48 million domestic tourists, increase tourism revenue to US\$ 18-19 billion by 2020 ii) Social: increase numbers employed in tourism to over 3 million, of which 870,000 are direct jobs, ensure tourism development contributes to the preservation and promotion of Vietnam's cultural values, improving the lives of its people iii) Environmental: develop green tourism activities associated with preserving and promoting the value of natural resources and environmental protection.

The ESRT Programme international experts, who co-wrote the Strategy alongside VNAT, recommend Vietnam place greater focus in marketing to the nearby markets of North East Asia (China, Japan, South Korea), Russia and Australia, markets that are still showing strong growth within the current global economic downturn environment. The Strategy also places strong emphasis on

further developing the domestic market, which is recognised as the industry's biggest market segment, increasing by more than 10.2% over the last decade.

A range of additional actions are recommended in the Strategy's Action Plan 2013-2015 including:

1. Further pick-up and ingrain the newly developed Vietnam tourism brand across all communications including the introduction of a new, consistent higher quality suite of publications.
2. Prioritise and expand inter- and intra-sectoral partnerships and public-private dialogue and co-operation in tourism marketing, investment, and development.
3. Bring Vietnam's tourism e-marketing efforts to an international standard including the development of a branded, destination website
4. Implement a domestic tourism campaign in partnership with provinces to increase the volume, value and wider distribution of home holidays
5. Focus on higher-yielding international tourists for greater sustainability and not just volume / mass tourism
6. Prioritise the development of regular, comprehensive tourism research and improve dissemination channels to the industry
7. Review overseas representation options according to the Strategy objectives, identify synergies in representation at tourism promotional events, and obtain increased support from private sector in marketing and promotion


While Mr Partale acknowledged that political commitment and a major injection of financial resources will be required to deliver the Marketing Strategy, including major changes in both the way VNAT is funded and the way in which it operates, it is estimated that the strategy if implemented in full could however, conservatively increase visitor numbers by an additional 2.2 million to 7.7 million visitors in 2015 and 8.2 million in 2016. And with estimated daily expenditure of tourists at \$115 (according to the National Tourism Master Plan), the Strategy's suggested investment in international marketing of \$7 million in 2016 would generate an additional \$253 million in international visitor expenditure. To finance the Strategy, a gradual incremental budget is recommended to be gradually increased as VNAT's capacities and private sector partnership improves, from 2.5 million USD in 2013 to 10 million in 2016.

## → ABOUT THE ESRT PROGRAMME

The ESRT Programme is the largest tourism technical support programme in Vietnam funded by the European Union with 11 million Euros with the Vietnamese Government contributing 1.1 million Euro. The Programme is being implemented from 2011 to 2015 with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as the Executing Authority, and the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism as the Implementing Agency.

The five key strategic pillars of the ESRT Programme are: Policy Support and Institutional Strengthening; Establishing useful Organisational Structures and Networks between the public and private; Developing a Skilled Tourism Labour Force; Improvement of Tourism Competitiveness; and Awareness Raising for Responsible Tourism.

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