

Press Release
Project LAO/020
Lao National Tourism Administration

Lao PDR Aims to Achieve Tourism Service Quality Through People by 2020

VIENTIANE, November 2, 2009 – The Lao National Tourism Organisation (LNTA), launched its National Tourism Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy entitled *Achieving Service Quality Through People* in an event held at the Lao Plaza Hotel.

Presiding over the Strategy launch was Mr. Somphong Mongkhonvilay Minister and Chairman of the LNTA who in his opening comments said, “I am convinced that by strengthening the institutional cooperative frameworks and technical capacity of our people we can improve service quality in our tourism industry which will have the end result of expanding opportunities for employment and profit making in this dynamic sector and establishing mechanisms for sustaining our fragile ecosystems, heritage and culture”.

Also present at the event was Mr. Marc Franck, Charge d’Affaire of the Embassy of Luxembourg who commented, “Today’s launch of the Human Resource Strategy for Lao PDR tourism is the culmination of a year of extensive work in research, analysis, stakeholder consultation and the crafting and design of an appropriate vision and strategic recommendations. Today marks not the end of a journey, but rather the beginning. Now, more than ever before in Lao PDR’s brief tourism history, it is essential that all sector stakeholders band together to achieve a common vision for the future: A vision that will make Lao PDR tourism internationally competitive through improved service quality”.

Recognising the importance of tourism as one of the country’s major engines of economic growth and poverty alleviation, the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has committed itself to assisting Lao PDR in strengthening human resources in the hospitality and tourism industry through the establishment of Lux-Development Project LAO/020.

In addition to commissioning the National HRD Strategy, the Project has recruited and mobilised 17 young teachers to Luxembourg and Singapore to undertake two years of professional studies in hospitality and tourism subjects. In 2010, the Project will commence construction of a National Tourism and Hospitality Training Centre as well as the development of national tourism-related curricula and supporting teaching materials.

The HRD Strategy highlights the fact that service quality lies at the heart of all successful tourism destinations and is generally recognised as a source of competitive advantage. The two part publication summarises the extensive fieldwork and research undertaken and sets out to map a vision for Lao PDR’s hospitality and tourism industry during the period 2010 – 2020. The underlying theme of the future vision is a focus on increasing Lao PDR international competitiveness through the delivery of service quality in the sector. Development goals relating to increased employment opportunities, enhanced export earnings and the use of tourism as a poverty alleviation mechanism also feature prominently as objectives of the vision. The corresponding strategic recommendations

Securing a competitive advantage through people requires careful and

are sub-divided into three pillars which collectively form the foundation for continued tactical planning, activity implementation and quality control.

It is estimated that by 2020, Lao PDR tourism will directly employ some 40,000 people. This will require the up-skilling of the existing 17,000-strong workforce and the development of another 23,000 new entrants into the tourism labour force. The strategy notes that elevating service quality will not happen by accident and securing a competitive advantage through people requires careful and deliberate investment over a sustained period in the education and training of the tourism workforce.

Project LAO/020's Chief Technical Advisor, Mr. Peter Semone commented, "The story of successful tourism destinations and enterprises is one that is largely about people: how they are recruited, how they are managed, how they are trained and educated, how they are valued and rewarded, and how they are supported through a process of continuous learning and career development".

In addition to the national launch, a number of provincial events will be organised in the coming months to ensure broad dissemination of the strategy both nationally and throughout the Greater Mekong Sub-region. A number of technical working groups will be established to follow up on strategy recommendations and ensure the successful implementation of the strategy over a sustained period.

About Project LAO/020

The Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has committed to the Government of the Lao PDR development support in the form of Project LAO/020 which is committed to *Strengthening of Human Resource Capacity in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in the Lao PDR*. This multi-faceted project, which commenced implementation in July 2008, provides an integrated approach to the critical human resource development requirements of the tourism sector in Lao PDR. Working together on Project implementation as the national counterpart is the Lao National Tourism Administration.

Contact information

Peter Semone
Chief Technical Advisor
Lux-Development Lao/020
Lao National Tourism Administration
Tourism and Hospitality Training Center
Lang Xang Avenue
P.O. Box 2098
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Office: +856 21 263 172
Mobile: +856 20 550-5986
Email: cta.nthtc@gmail.com