



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Strengthening of Inland Tourism (SIT) in Quang Nam Province – Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Vietnam

Final Evaluation: December 2013

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

ILO Office Administratively backstopping the Project: CO Hanoi

ILO Technical Backstopping Office: DWT Bangkok

Evaluation Manager: Oktavianto Pasaribu

Evaluation Consultant: Kai Marcus Schröter & Nguyen Thi Ha

Project End: 31 December 2013

Project Code: VIE/10/01/LUX

Donor & Project Budget: Luxembourg (US\$ 1,350,000)

Keywords: tourism, capacity building, local economic development, poverty alleviation

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The “Strengthening of Inland Tourism in Quang Nam Province (SIT)” was a technical cooperation project in Vietnam, funded by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Its overall aim was to utilize Quang Nam’s tourism sector as a driver for poverty reduction in the province, especially for individuals from disadvantaged regions of the province.

Travel and tourism has grown significantly in Vietnam over the years. As a major contributor to

the country’s socio-economic development, the Government of Vietnam (GOV) formally declared the tourism sector as a spearhead industry and recognized its outstanding role for employment, investment, income generation and poverty reduction in the country (National Action Program for Tourism 2013-2020, 2011; Strategy on Vietnam’s Tourism Development until 2020, Vision to 2030, 2013).

In spite of these positive developments, Vietnam’s tourism is concentrated in a relatively few major destinations, thus limiting the sector’s impact. Whilst some areas have developed into favoured hotspots and seen an increase of foreign and domestic tourists, other, more remote mountainous areas and their inhabitants have benefitted little. Central Vietnam, home to ample historical, cultural, natural tourist attractions and three world heritage sites, with strong development at its coastline and beaches, but little tourism inland, exemplifies this phenomenon.

The main objective of the project was to develop a replicable and sustainable approach that contributes to gender sensitive pro-poor and pro-jobs tourism development in Vietnam.

The project’s immediate objectives:

1. Pro-poor Development of the Hospitality and Travel Industry for Inland Tourism in Quang Nam.
2. Pro-poor Development of Two Selected Value Chains which Are Critical to the Development of the Hospitality and Travel Industry for Inland Tourism in Quang Nam.
3. Awareness of the Project’s Experience, Lessons Learnt and Tools among Stakeholders in the

Tourism Sector, Nationally and in Selected Other Provinces.

The project's intervention logic, strategy and main means of action were based on taking the value chain development (VCD) approach. This strategy was expected to contribute to developing more inland tourism destinations and creating better economic livelihoods and employment for local people. The project also aimed at creating replicable and sustainable tourism models for the other regions, in line with Vietnam's Tourism Action Plan and Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP). The project was implemented under full guidance from the Hanoi Core Statement principles and as an integral part of the One UN Plan Result Area for Pro-poor Employment Creation for Youth.

The project was headed by the Project Management Board (PMB) based in Tam Ky, Quang Nam, which consisted mainly of leaders from provincial authorities, various government departments, state mass organizations and the ILO project management. Its main role was to steer and supervise the project and advise on, identify and approve areas of interventions and activities. The ILO Project Office in Tam Ky was in charge of planning, managing, coordinating and implementing the project. The project management was supported by technical working groups in the development of community-based tourism and local product value chains and the organization of related output and activities.

Present Situation of the Project

The SIT project was initially planned for a period of 3 years, from May 2010 to May 2013 (36 months). It got officially approved in May 2010, but started with a delay of over one year, in July 2011, with the establishment of the Project Management Board (PMB). A non-cost extension was granted by the donor and the implementing parties until the end of December 2013. Thus, the project had a final duration of 30 months. As of 31 December 2013, the project came formally to an end.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation main purpose was to determine the achievement of stated objectives and outputs, identify constraints and contributing factors, determine the steps taken towards sustainability, determine the potential as model for future

interventions, assessing the lessons learned and making recommendations for possible future projects.

The evaluation's scope was to assess the following key evaluation criteria of the project:

- Relevance and Strategic Fit
- Validity of Design
- Project Progress and Effectiveness
- Adequacy and Efficiency of Resource Use
- Effectiveness of Management Arrangements
- Impact Orientation and Sustainability

The evaluation was conducted from 05 November 2013 to 05 January 2014. The following geographic areas were covered by the evaluation: 1. Tam Ky (municipality and provincial capital), 2. Duy Xuyen (district) and 3. Dong Giang (district) in Quang Nam province, Central Vietnam.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluations data collection methods and instruments utilized were:

1. Desk Review
2. Survey/ Questionnaires
3. Face-to-Face Interviews
4. Onsite Observations
5. Focus Group Discussions

The following two most important points for the selection of methods and instruments:

First, the collection of data through a mix of different methods and from different data sources, in order to strengthen the credibility and usefulness of evaluation results.

Second, the design of a rating system which would produce reliable and valid empirical data, allowing a more systematic approach towards assessing the project's performance, as well as the measuring, comparing and reporting of project performance across different organizational levels, programmes and agencies. A range of data collection methods and tools were selected and clearly described in the inception report, each with advantages and disadvantages.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Based on its findings, the evaluation rates the SIT project overall as Satisfactory, having achieved its immediate objectives and outcomes to a large extent.

A majority of stakeholders agreed that the project was relevant and strategically fitting, valid in design, efficiently managed and effectively implemented. As evidenced by findings of the evaluation, most stakeholders also consented that though the project had made considerable impact on beneficiaries, it was not sustainable at its current stage.

As per findings from the the survey, in summary of all key evaluation criteria, stakeholders rated the project as “Good” to “Very Good” (Chart 01). The average score for all criteria was 4.0 (Good), with “Relevance and Strategic Fit”, “Validity of Design”, “Efficiency” and “Effectiveness” achieving 4.0 or higher, and “Impact and Sustainability” scoring with 3.76 slightly below (Chart 02).

In summary, stakeholders expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the performance of the project. The conduct of useful activities with tangible results, awareness raising and changing mindset of villagers, overall committed stakeholders and engagement of targeted communities, and contributions made towards job creation, income generation, livelihoods improvements and reduction of poverty through CBT and local product value chains were all highlighted by stakeholders as major achievements of the project. In regards to challenges, participants pointed out the limited educational background and skills of local villagers, long-term dependencies on public services, limited entrepreneurial spirit and business skills and the lack of direct linkages and access to tourism markets, which were regarded as considerable threats to the impact and sustainability of the project’s achievements. A majority of villagers expected a further expansion and development of CBT products and services, to take ownership of tourism activities and receive continued support and training in this regard.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Recommendation 01: Examine the country’s tourism needs and scrutinize local counterpart’s calls for project proposals and beneficiaries’ requirements.

Recommendation 02: Adjust strategic approach and narrow objectives of tourism interventions. Address cross-cutting issues and achieve macro-policy objectives through focus on industry/ sector-driven project outputs and activities.

Recommendation 03: Improve research and mapping of other relevant tourism projects during the early planning and design of new interventions. Take lessons learned and good practices into consideration. Avoid overlaps and duplications. Identify most relevant project partners and follow through with cooperation.

Recommendation 04: Establish a sound monitoring and evaluation system from the beginning of projects, in line with established tourism performance indicators. Align DCED with UNWTO standards. Identify and apply key issues, targets, indicators, baseline data and data collection methods consistently and coherently throughout the project.

Recommendation 05: Coordinate and align planning, design and implementation of tourism projects with approval processes, annual work plans and budgets of local counterparts and beneficiaries.

Recommendation 06: Research, identify and describe tourism project beneficiaries accurately and adequately. Take local context into account.

Recommendation 07: Improve adequacy and efficiency of use of resources by reducing administrative expenses and increasing technical cooperation, assistance and consultancy in tourism.

Recommendation 08: Streamline, simplify and increase effectiveness of project management arrangements, organizational structures and decision making processes.

Recommendation 09: Shift administration and management of SIT project from government agencies (direct beneficiaries) to administration by

ILO and management by rural communities (ultimate beneficiaries).

Recommendation 10: Strengthen strategic management and technical coordination of tourism projects. Combine foreign know how with local skills.

Recommendation 11: Shift project interventions' approach from capacity building activities and workshops with local government agencies to technical assistance and on-the-job trainings in rural communities.

Recommendation 12: Ensure project interventions result in favourable government policies, rules and regulations for tourism on provincial and national levels.

Recommendation 13: Institutionalize dialogue and partnerships between public and private tourism sector. Leverage knowledge, expertise and support from the tourism and hospitality industry. Improve capacity of the public sector in tourism planning, management, marketing and promotion. Facilitate and promote further tourism market linkages.

Recommendation 14: Increase management capacity and effectiveness of tourism associations, business organizations and other private sector representatives on provincial and national level.

Recommendation 15: Develop existing and create new tourism products and services, which are attractive, competitive, customer focused and market driven.

Recommendation 16: Provide further training to rural communities. Implement trainer development programmes and apply TOT model to all future training interventions. Build capacity and empower villagers to take full ownership of CBT activities and participate in entire value chains. Facilitate and promote market access and direct sales of products and services to tourists.

Recommendations 17: Continue and expand the output of relevant, practical and user-friendly training manuals, toolkits, and tourism and local product marketing materials.

Recommendation 18: Invest further in physical and public tourism infrastructure

Important lessons learned

Lesson Learned 01: Industry/ sector-oriented project outputs and activities help to address cross-cutting issues and achieve macro-policy objectives of LED and DWCP interventions.

Lesson Learned 02: DCED standards of monitoring and evaluation require further capacity building of stakeholders, alignment with industry/ sector standards and proper application during project planning, design and implementation.

Lesson Learned 03: Results of LED and DWCP interventions are unlikely to be sustainable without the sufficient participation, engagement and support from the private sector. Public-private dialogue and partnerships need to be strengthened and institutionalized.