

National Tourism Agenda

On 11 June 2009, all tourism related sectors, both government and private, joined efforts with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (“MOTS”) to propose draft strategies and measures for 2009-2012 to the Cabinet for approval. The proposal consists of 2 parts: (i) urgent measures for reviving and stimulating the tourism industry for the year of 2009 (“Urgent Measures”) and (ii) recovery strategies and stimulation measures for the tourism industry during the 2009-2012 period (“Long Term Strategies”).

Urgent Measures

These measures will tackle the effects of the significant downturn in the tourism industry across the country. The three key elements are:

Human Resources Support and Development

- Allocate a special budget to subsidise the cost of in-house tourism training courses
- Provide training allowances and social security insurance
- Retain minimum wages for some areas of the tourism business in order to improve labour retention within the industry

Liquidity and Cost Reduction Measures

To alleviate financial hardship in the tourism industry and other affected businesses, the Government will implement the following measures:

- Monetary Measures
 - » Provide low interest loans with relaxed conditions for tourism business operators
 - » Exempt employers and employees in the tourism industry from making social security contributions
 - » Consider re-categorising tourism businesses as low-risk
 - » Waive visa fees for tourists from all countries
 - » Delay the collection of hotel operation fees (set at THB80 per room per annum)
 - » Reduce the electrical guarantee for hotel operators to 1.25% of monthly electricity bills
 - » Reduce the landing and parking fees for all airports under the supervision of the Department of Civil Aviation and the Airports of Thailand PCL
 - » Reduce the entrance fees for national parks for both Thai and international tourists

- Tax Measures
 - » Provide personal income tax exemptions for the taxable income band up to at THB200,000 for workers in some areas of the tourism business
 - » Allow double tax deductions for actual expenses incurred in organising seminars and training in the country
 - » Provide corporate income tax exemptions to any travel operators with revenue lower than THB600,000
 - » Allow medium-sized travel operators with revenue of more than THB600,000 but not exceeding THB1,800,000, and large travel operators with revenue of more than THB1,800,000, to pay tax by instalments without interest or fine
 - » Reduce VAT imposed on the tourism industry
 - » Allow Thai tourists to include travel expenses of THB20,000 - 30,000 as personal income tax exemptions
- » Adjust the 2009 budget to accommodate the expenses of seminars, meetings and educational tours using venues in the country instead of overseas
- » Continuously foster public relations, promote tourism and communication with tourists
- Tourism Marketing

Various projects are being planned to enhance tourism sales by bolstering confidence and attracting both Thai and foreign tourists to travel around Thailand.
- Environment Development

The related government sectors will develop as well as standardise tourism areas and sanitation facilities. Local authorities will issue regulations for tourists' safety and security, while making sure that their convenience is not compromised.

Earnings Measures

- Commercial Support and Investment

Issue ministerial and other regulations to specify the areas for the Royal Coast Tourism Development Plan
- Tourism Promotion
 - » Arrange seminars, meetings and training in the country by using services provided by the private sector
 - » Issue a wide range of travel insurance coverage to foreign tourists visiting Thailand, including coverage for natural disasters and outbreaks

Long Term Strategies

This is a four-year plan to facilitate recovery of the industry and also to re-structure the tourism sector as a whole. The 8 key strategic methods of tourism recovery are:

Developing Infrastructure, Public Utilities and other Facilities

- Improve infrastructure, public utilities and other tourism facilities to meet international standards of convenience and safety
- Develop and adopt telecommunications and other technologies

- Develop and improve inland transportation by constructing new roads and linkages between the road networks and rail services, integrating all methods of inland transportation and building extensive road networks linked with neighbouring countries
- Improve conditions and convenience at border crossing points

Creating Activities

The MOTS will create various stimulating activities and encourage tourism investment with the assistance of neighbouring countries and other countries in the region.

In order to upgrade Thailand as a competitive destination for various types of tourism, new tourism trends will be created to satisfy tourists' preferences, such as Environmental, Health and Wellness, Business, Adventures and Sports, Food, Religious, Educational, Long Stay, International Meetings and Conventions, and Cruise Tourism.

Recovery and Development of the Sustainable Tourism

The MOTS will be responsible for the standardisation of tourism areas, businesses and services; and also for the creation of community networks for tourism quality development.

Safety and Security

An accident prevention scheme will be issued. Computer chips will be installed in vehicles for speed control and the digital tachographs will be used to inspect driver qualifications, training, log book and hours of service requirements.

Emergency points, lifeguard stations and risk and crisis management centres will be established

Human Resource Development

With a view to creating employment opportunities, the Government will improve professional excellence at all levels of training in the tourism industry.

Various training courses will be devised to provide focused skills training for personnel in the tourism industry to enhance their employability and competitiveness in the market. The educational system will be restructured and tourism subjects will be introduced as core courses. Language training for efficient communication, particularly in English, will be provided. Skills will be improved through better management and leadership, customer service training, and better career development for existing and future employees.

Additionally, a tourism-specific human resources institute will be established to provide specifications, supervision and development of personnel and services in the tourism industry. It will also work alongside governmental and private sectors in providing tourism training programs.

Building Image and Confidence

Guidelines for the integrated development and standardisation of tourism products and services will be established. A serene and peaceful country ideal for leisure and offering quality, world-class attractions and services will be presented.

Boosting Inbound Tourism

International perceptions of Thailand will be improved by continuously developing and promoting a clear and concise country brand that enhances a sense of being welcome, and will position Thailand as a premier tourism destination.

Promotion campaigns to attract more business for conferences and events and to make Thailand more competitive in the world market by strengthening links with organisers in Thailand.

Encouraging Domestic Travel

Promotion of Thailand to Thai tourists as a vacation destination instead of overseas to encourage spending within the country.

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