

Ecotourism in Vietnam: Potential and Reality

With 13,000 floral species and over 15,000 faunal species, three newly discovered big animal species, and a ratio of country/world species of 6.3%, Vietnam is one of sixteen countries with the highest biodiversity in the world. Its wide range of ecosystems and shift to an open economy make it a very favorable site for ecotourism development. Indeed, tourism has been identified by the government as a spearhead economic industry and there has been a seven-fold increase in international tourist visits with [Vietnam visa](#) in the last decade. Ecotourists account for over 30% of international and nearly 50% of domestic tourists. Ecotourism is distinguished from mass or resort tourism by its lower impact on the environment, lower infrastructure requirements, and educational role regarding natural environments and cultural values.

Potential target areas for ecotourism include coastal ecosystems (sea-grass, coral reef, lagoon, sandy beach, and mangrove habitats), limestone mountains, national parks and nature reserves, and fruit gardens. Most of these are not only interesting landscapes, but home to Vietnam's rich cultural identity. Ethnic minorities-resident in most potential ecotourist sites have a deep understanding of traditional festivals, land use customs, culinary culture, traditional lifestyle and handicrafts, and historical places.

Despite such great potential, this paper identifies several areas in which so-called ecotourism in Vietnam falls short of the ideal. There has been investment in nature reserves by the state and in restaurants and [hotels in Nha Trang](#), Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi by foreign investors, but not the kind of investment in human resources needed by tourist guides and staff, especially training in environmental knowledge. Tourism is still largely spontaneous and unregulated, resulting in environmental degradation. Local populations, their cultural identities, and traditional customs are not much involved in ecotourism, nor are they reaping its economic benefits. Finally, tourism management and policy are fragmented among various levels of government, resulting in a lack of national strategy.

The paper recommends: coordination among concerned bodies to develop ecotourism while conserving vulnerable ecosystems and defending cultural integrity; environmental impact assessments and research on carrying capacities; compulsory human resource training for ecotourism staff; and the engagement of local communities, not only in income-generating activities but also in conservation work.

Eco-tourism is in its infancy in Vietnam

Eco-tourism is a relatively new idea that has dramatically captured the attention of many people from a variety of backgrounds. It seems to be a catch-all word that has different meaning to different persons. To some it means ecologically-sound tourism; to others it is synonymous with nature tourism, alternative, appropriate, responsible, ethical, green, environmentally friendly or sustainable tourism. Despite the continued debate about exactly what eco-tourism entails, it seems that most agree that Eco-tourism must be a force for sustaining natural resources. Eco-tourism is nature travel that advances conservation and sustainable development efforts.

Eco-tourism is in its infancy in Vietnam, yet it has certainly become a buzz word in a short period of time. Everyone appears to be talking about it - and the media are

latching onto the term wholeheartedly. My preliminary observation is that there is a general lack of understanding, in both the local media and tourism industry, of what constitutes an eco-tourism experience, what an eco-tourism venture/initiative entails, and what the underlying rationale for eco-tourism is.

Eco-tourism is a specialized, niche market that has evolved with the diversification of the tourism industry into 'alternative' or 'special interest' forms of tourism, including nature and adventure tourism.

Ecologic center

With the pace of industrial life in a hurry, the people did not always have time to live with nature, discover nature. It's hard to believe that now, many children do not understand how grown vegetables, trees, how animals grow. There are many herbs that grow around the house and are very useful for our lives, but we do not know. Today, many tourists do not like to stay in 4-star, 5 stars hotels, they want to live more closely with the Vietnamese people to better understand the lives of local people.

Based on the above conditions, we would like to introduce our (customer intimacy) a new destination located 150 km from Hanoi, 15 km from the Cathedral of Phat Diem stone - one of the famous cathedrals of Asia. From here you can take the road to Hai Phong and Ha Long, Ha Noi. You can spend there after visiting the former capital of Vietnam dated tenth century (Hoa Lu), sightseeing in Halong Bay Land (Tam Coc) and the Cathedral of Phat Diem. The ferry crossing can imagine the tourists themselves are moving into the Mekong River as the girl in the movie (The Lover) by Marguerite Duras. Here, tourists can live with nature in the quiet, peaceful, pure among inhabitants, make known medicinal herbs, learn to make bonsai and sample local delicacies. This destination is called "The Ecology Center of Hai Hau", it's located in the district of Hai Hau, Nam Dinh province. It is directly to the possession of the Agency's Travel Vietnam Ecotour.